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Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career

By

Fang Lin

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Education

at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career

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January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This case study explores the influence that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum has on Chinese graduates in the work experience. It also examines whether the ESP courses are more beneficial in the workplace than traditional English courses, and how ESP curriculum should be re-designed to adapt to the requirements of job markets. The data were collected through online interviews from five participants whose majors were English and who graduated from Chinese universities. All of the participants had at least one year of work experience in English-speaking countries. The findings of this research show that universities' ESP curriculum design, co-op or internship for related courses, work environment, and teachers' specific field knowledge do have significant and positive influence on participants in the workforce. In addition, the study's findings suggest that Chinese universities should re-design or develop their ESP curriculum to let their students better meet future job requirements.

*Key words:* ESP curriculum, influence, challenges, Chinese graduates, workforce

## **DEDICATION**

*To myself*

*To my best friends*

*To my special friend*

*To my dear mother and my elder brother*

*To all people who support me*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ESP – English for Specific Purposes

ESL – English as Second Language

EFL – English as Foreign Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

EAP – English for Academic Purposes

EOP – English for Occupational Purposes

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Problem Statement

English is a compulsory education program for primary schools in China and has gradually been introduced into many schools as a component of the national curriculum. It emphasizes the importance of English in the Chinese Education system (Qi, 2016). The relationship between English teaching and learning is becoming more and more intertwined because Peng (2015) states that if students gain confidence in this process of learning English and have a sense of success, then learning English would be considered as an interesting and useful experience. If the teachers see the enthusiasm and commitment of students during the English teaching process, then English teaching would be considered to be a useful and pleasant experience. As a result, Zhou (1988) states that, in theory, every Chinese English teacher knows that students should learn to read academic publications in English and then students should learn how to write research papers which are related to their major. Rao (2013) notes that in order to promote students' English learning proficiency, Chinese English teachers use Western modern English teaching methods instead of traditional English teaching methods. However, adults and children learn English much differently, and this means for universities students, their English learning is more purposeful. Also, they usually have more motivation to learn English than younger students (Wu, Wu & Le, 2014).

There is a phenomenon that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching is becoming more and more popular in English language teaching around the world, and it becomes more effective than other types of English language teaching (Li, 1984). Especially for Chinese university students, ESP courses can help improve their

professional English skills, which can have a great influence on their career. Rautenbach, Mann, and Van Ryneveld (2017) observe that the development of ESP curriculum for universities has become increasingly significant. ESP is the social demand of the rapid development of English society, the development of linguistics and the educational psychology in university education. ESP teaching in different environments absolutely should have their own methods and courses because it has a different goal, different content and different purposes (Wang, 2007).

With the continuous expansion and involvement of international business, Chinese universities should be attached great importance to the design of ESP courses which can help students lay a good foundation for future professional development (Gao, 2007). Because the design of ESP curriculum not only emphasizes language development, but also takes professional skills into consideration, which means that the combination of language skills and specific information is the goal of ESP curriculum design (Rautenbach et al., 2017). In China, ESP is designed for students whose major is in some specific fields which include English major, but universities only have tried to provide a few ESP courses for English major students, so English major students should be given more chances to develop their professional English skills in certain specific fields (Zhang, 2011).

Previous research on ESP curriculum has focused on the impact of ESP teaching and ESP courses. Some research has examined the question that ESP courses and materials can promote students' English proficiency (Chien & Hsu, 2010). Other studies that have focused on the ESP courses have impacted students' future performance (Vavelyuk, 2015). Because the ESP program is also popular in China, many institutions

and universities offer ESP courses for students. Over the past years, ESP teaching has been limited to professional vocabularies and sentence structures, which fundamentally ignores students' personal interests and job requirements. This often decreases their English learning motivation. In turn, when they use English in their future job, their performance may be poor (Gao, 2007). However, few studies have examined how ESP curriculum affects Chinese graduate's career, especially for those who work abroad after they graduate. According to Caciora, Veronica and Amalia (2014),

ESP is a very broad domain, referring mainly to teaching English to students or people who need it for specific purposes such as work, or in their future occupational development. In these faculties ESP is the main instrument for teaching a foreign language. In contrast to general English, ESP starts from the assessment of those functions and purposes for which English is required, as well as of the skills the learner might need most. (p. 59)

Wu, et al. (2014) found that native Chinese speakers who were living in English-speaking countries had language difficulties. At the same time, although most college or university students start to learn English when they are at primary school, they still lack sufficient English language skills, which makes it hard for them to adapt the ESP courses at the beginning (Wang, 2007). According to the national curriculum requirements, students English learning time is also very limited. Most of them are usually poor at English, especially at listening and speaking. Therefore, they do not have deep interest in learning English. However, it contradicts that they are aware of the importance of English in people's lives and work, and are eager to learn it well (Gong, 2012). Thus, more research should focus on what kind of language challenges Chinese graduates face, or

whether there is any ESP teaching curriculum that Chinese universities should improve to meet the students' needs in their future workforce with regard to English.

Also, there are some limitations of ESP teaching in China because Wang (2007) states that to teach ESP in China, administrators should take students' English proficiency into consideration, as well as students' background and the appropriate use of English teaching methods. Therefore, the requirements for ESP teaching are that teachers should combine professional knowledge in addition to a good command of English skills. As English teachers are usually only experts in English, it is a great challenge for them (Gong, 2012), so the English teachers for ESP courses should come from English department faculties, and be interested in expending their expertise in specific field (Zhang, 2011). In order to solve these problems and help students adapt to a competitive society, universities' English faculties should design ESP courses that can better equip students for future professional communication (Gao, 2007). As a result, Gao (2010) states that needs analysis and material evaluation should be taking into consideration as the prerequisite, material developers should consider factors such as authenticity, variety, and creativity. In addition, the content should be continuously improved and enriched on the grounds of feedback from users.

Existing studies of ESP teaching are mainly quantitative with a focus on the outcomes of ESP. However, qualitative methods can provide detailed views of participants who work abroad in their own words and experience, and different working experience can shape my former colleagues' views about ESP curriculum in Chinese universities. In addition, qualitative inquiry provides the chance to involve my former colleagues as participants and the data can enhance educational administrators'

understanding of ESP curriculum and the real working situation. By analyzing these multiple experiences, using qualitative methods and involving my former colleagues as participants, we can have a better understanding about the advantages and disadvantages relating to ESP curriculum in Chinese universities. According to this understanding, I can establish some recommendations on current ESP curriculum in Chinese universities and administrators or teachers can alter and improve about current teaching practices, objectives and curriculum to meet the needs of students' occupational development.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, I answered the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between English for specific purposes courses and Chinese graduates' workforce?
2. What language challenges (first month or first week) do Chinese university graduates face when working abroad?
3. How useful do participants find ESP courses as it relates to their workforce?
4. What recommendations do participants give for the improvement of the existing ESP curriculum in Chinese universities?



## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **ESL and EFL**

Saito and Ebsworth (2004) state that with the global use of English, English as Second Language (ESL) teaching and teacher education are quickly expanding. The data show that between 2000 and 2001, more than 85,000 foreign students studied English courses in American colleges and universities. This number is far beyond the imagination now because Morris and Maxey (2014) note that the number of international students grew by 5.7% to 764,495 in America during the year of 2011-2012, and 25.4% of international students are Chinese. ESL courses are designed for learners whose first language, or mother language, is a language other than English, and most ESL learners dwell in English speaking countries like Canada, America, Australia and Britain (Leung, Davison, & Mohan, 2014). According to Fox, Cheng, and Zumbo (2014), the goal of ESL programs is usually to increase communicative competence and they tend to emphasize speech activities and social interactions. Previous studies have shown that ESL courses often focus on overall language development and conversational English. ESL programs make extensive use of thematic units that feature oral communication situations, such as meetings, and a broad range of printed material. Fox et al. (2014) note that speaking activities and social interactions tend to predominate in ESL lessons. Hawkins and Legler (2004) argue that good language learners use various strategies to gain control over their new language skills.

In China, English programs are called Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs instead of ESL programs. EFL has a long history of more than one hundred years, and the history of EFL teaching can be dated to 1862 when China was opened to the West (Rao, 2013). The main difference between EFL and ESL is that EFL

students usually need English to meet a specific requirement, whereas ESL students need English for academic or professional purposes (Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). This means that EFL is considered the language learning that occurs in countries where English is not a native language, while ESL refers to language learning in countries where English is the primary language (Ekiert, 2005).

Chinese is the official language in China and English is taught as a foreign language. All subjects are taught in Chinese at most schools, while English is included in the national curriculum as a compulsory subject in school (Gao, 2007). English is not an official language in China. The current EFL program means that English is a foreign language in China instead of an additional language. The difference between mother tongue and foreign language is that when people acquire their mother tongue, they have a natural need to learn it due to the essential need of communicating. However, this does not work when acquiring a foreign language as people do not live in a place where its use is indispensable (García, 2014). Alternately, García (2014) also suggests that the process of learning a foreign language is fundamentally distinct. Children do not have the language environment because they are not surrounded by the target language, and they are only exposed to it in primary and secondary schools, universities, language centers, or private English lessons, so it could be established that there is a frequent lack of real engagement. They live in a context where their mother tongue is more than enough to communicate, so the need to interact with other people does not have any effect when learning a foreign language. In the light of this situation, another way to stimulate EFL learners should be explored. Also, Gao (2007) states that with the globalization of trade and economy and the increasing number of international communication in many fields,

the demand for ESP is expanding, especially in countries where English is granted as a foreign Language.

### **The Definition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

There are several definitions of ESP, and most are valid; however, each has limitations (Bojovic, 2006). For example, assuming that ESP began in the 1960s, then the definitions of ESP in the literature have come relatively late. Hutchinson (1987) defines ESP as an approach rather than a product, meaning that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material, or methodology. The basic concern regarding ESP is why the learner needs to learn a foreign language. Thus, the purpose of learning English became the basis upon which the pedagogy was designed.

Strevens' (1988) definition of ESP makes a distinction between absolute and two-variable characteristics. In absolute characteristics, language teaching is designed to meet specified needs of the learner. The content is therefore related to particular disciplines, occupations and activities and is centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, text, discourse, and semantics. Moreover, an analysis of the discourse is designed in contrast with general English. Alternately, with two-variable characteristics, ESP may be restricted to the language skills being learned, such as reading, and are not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

Robinson's (1991) definition of ESP is based on two assumptions: that ESP is normally "goal-directed", and that ESP courses are developed from a needs analysis. The needs analysis determines students' goals with respect to their English language abilities and the courses are developed based upon this, creating a homogenous classroom. However, the needs of students are varied; therefore, there are a number of characteristics and objectives that are present in each classroom and classes consequently become

constrained and limited with respect to time because they cannot address all of the specialist studies present in each classroom.

### **The Relationship between ESP and ELT**

Bojovic (2006) observes that ESP has been seen as a separate activity within English Language Teaching (ELT), and ESP addresses the communication needs for particular occupational groups, and it develops quickly and becomes the major force in ELT. However, ELT focuses on relevant occupational English, which combines basic English skills and the use of specific disciplines, such as Computer English, Mechanical and Electrical English, Business English and Medical English (Gong, 2012). Peng (2010) suggests that for some of its teaching, ESP has developed its own methodology and that its research draws on research from various disciplines in addition to applied linguistics. As an applied language skill ESP has become an indispensable part in university English teaching. This is the key distinguishing characteristic of ESP. Although it has sometimes moved away from the established trends in general ELT, ESP has always employed needs analysis and prepared learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their field of study or work situation.

### **The Development of ESP**

Zhang (2011) comments that in China, English courses start at grade two in primary school, and usually students continue their English learning until graduating from university. Also, the English courses are offered to both English major and non-English major students at universities. However, university students have different English curriculum, for non-English major students their English focuses more on reading, writing, listening and speaking, while for English major students, their English curriculum emphasizes more on specific courses like Advanced English, Translation,

Business English, and English Literature. Wang (2007) notes that although the development of ESP teaching and research started late in China, it has grown rapidly. This is because of the fact that all international trades and professions need composite talents who are not only good at English, but also have some professional knowledge in their working field. Habtoor (2012) suggests that ESP has witnessed substantial developments over the past five decades. These developments are related directly to the developments in various disciplines with reference to specific language needs. However, he acknowledges that within English as a Foreign or Second Language learning, ESP has grown into full-fledged discipline and has become increasingly critical within English language learning since 1960s.

Habtoor (2012) also notes that ESP has witnessed growth in interest around the world. Universities and vocational institutions find it an essential practice to create ESP programs for their students. In this regard, many theorists have developed unique definitions of ESP. For instance, Habtoor (2012) argues that ESP addresses the specific needs of specific learners and in turn becomes a defining element that determines the direction, content, and goals, of a course. Thus, ESP is a unique domain of teaching and learning English in the sense that materials and methods are set in accordance with the learner's needs. In this regard, ESP is seen as a more focused domain of teaching English, which suggests that it seems to be the ideal answer that ESP and the learners' requirement connect closely due to the educational activities. Strevens (1988) observes that ESP emphasizes English language and is designed to meet specific learning needs that relate to content, particular disciplines, occupations, and activities.

## **The Current ESP Situation in China**

A survey shows that 82.5% of the Chinese university students are unable to use English effectively in their own field even though they have passed the required English standard tests like CET4 and CET6 (College English Test, band 4 and 6), which means that students are still ineffective in their field language after CET4 and CET6 (Zhang, 2011). With the impact of economic globalization, more and more people choose to work abroad, so there are some important criteria for employee selection (Remhof, Gunkel, & Schlaegel, 2014). English is one of the most common languages in the world because people adopt English as the international language for communication and it is widely used all around the world (Gao, 2007), and ESP is considered as a new trend in English Language Teaching because, as Zhou (2013) states that international cultural communication and trade exchange between China and foreign countries have greatly increased in these years. Requirements of the employees who are able to carry out international communication on science and technology in English increase as well. There is a phenomenon that English is becoming a medium for teaching other subjects in universities all around the world. Students with insufficient English skills will encounter some difficulties (Vavelyuk, 2015), so most universities develop English curriculum for their students. As a mandatory course, English has a great impact on Chinese education because some English courses help students develop further interest in their study and their chosen field of specialization, and this means that they understand what they are learning now will be useful to their future career (Gong, 2012). Also, it is widely held that English courses in university can help non-English majors' ability to use English in specific fields (Zhou, 1998) and English courses provide students with tools for their future jobs (Cheng, 2002). However, Kassim and Ali (2010) state that most universities

aim to produce graduates who can meet or exceed the requirements of their future industry. The authors collected data from engineering students from a developed country. All of this illustrates how students, who want to become global engineers in the future, should improve their English language skills first, and students' English language skills should be cultivated and improved through their language practice (Zhou, 2013). Because nowadays, it cannot be denied that successful communication is essential to everyone. It is an essential part in the development of any fields, which can be seen from the fundamental need to transfer information and share communication or reactions. As a result, Gong (2012) states it should cater to the market demands and aim at practical application. The course development is based on the analysis of the job requirements so as to improve students' occupational capabilities and overall ability. The course objectives are determined to meet the job requirements and the occupational environment. Moreover, the development of course content focuses on basic career knowledge and skills. Students' ability to complete specific tasks can impact their work performance. In other words, ELT at vocational college should be associated with the occupational environment and contribute to the progress of improving English proficiency to meet the job requirements.

### **The Roles and Challenges of ESP Courses**

A significant amount of research has been conducted to show that ESP courses play a vital role in student's future performance. For instance, Vavelyuk (2015) designed an ESP course for science students to develop English skills and integrate themselves into the international academic community, and found that when students improved their academic skills while learning English, they also developed other important skills easily

transferable to any other field. At the same time, this development shows us that ESP courses are important for developing students' English language skills, and that participants who receive ESP for law courses think it is very meaningful for their study and career (B. Xhaferi, 2011; G. Xhaferi, 2011). Similarly, Yogman and Kaylani (1996) use their own experience to conduct a four-week business English program, which illustrates the differences between ESP and ESL programs and how these programs and curriculum development can be refined through multi-level assessments of students. The research result shows that ESP program helps students to gain a meaningful and vital experience in their target language. What's more, Kuo (2016) also states that ESP is designed to be learned and practiced as a basic component for employment preparation or occupational development. Participants utilize their ESP skills to enhance their occupational development and mobility, and advice is given to help enhance student's ESP learning to meet the needs of their workforce.

Many elements of ESP courses or materials can improve student's English proficiency. For example, Bojovic (2006) notes ESP courses use authentic materials, which is possible if people accept the claim that ESP courses should be offered at a middle or advanced level. The use of such materials, modified by teachers or unmodified, is common in ESP, especially in self- focused studies or research tasks. The students are usually encouraged to conduct research using a variety of different resources including the Internet. Bojovic (2006) also states that ESP also has purpose-related orientation, which refers to the simulation of communicative tasks required by the target environment. This means that the teacher can give students different tasks to simulate the session preparation, which includes the preparation of papers, reading, note-taking, and writing.



As a result, English courses for students involve in the tasks of presenting a particular activity, which allows students to practice listening skills. However, the application is restricted because they employ newly acquired skills during their ESP classes with their colleagues and teacher. Bojovic (2006) observes that ESP allows students to determine their direction as it is concerned with turning learners into users. For self-direction, it is necessary that the teacher encourage students to have a certain degree of autonomy with regard to when, what, and how they will study, and for high-ability learners, it is essential to learn how to access information in a new culture (Bojovic, 2006).

According to Chien and Hsu (2010), ESP courses can significantly improve students' English proficiency since ESP courses are of various types, depending on specific scientific fields or professions, and have specific features, teachers teaching such courses need to play different roles and acquire certain knowledge. It is interesting that the suggested percentage of ESP course materials correlate with the percentage of students who improved in their English proficiency at the end of the ESP courses. It is obvious that pre-existing English knowledge has some impact on students' performance in ESP (Chostelidou, 2011). However, it is different for those students who take vocational English courses in Taiwan. Hua and Beverton (2013) explored the extent to which general English courses are perceived to be adapted to students' future career. Students think that their English courses will provide them with relevant knowledge and skills, but the English courses they receive do not necessarily equip them for their future employment, so it is recommended that the English curriculum should be reviewed. At the same time, Tzoannopoulou (2015) pays much attention to the convergence between content and language integrated learning and English for specific purposes. To design the

materials, Tzoannopoulou (2015) used scaffolding and interaction as techniques that accompanied learning in order to make students more autonomous. Course material designs have also used these methods to help improve students' English proficiency.

Wang (2007) notes that ESP teaching and research start late in China, but it develops quickly recently. This is because many industries need composite talents, and they not only master English skills, but also consciously master the professional knowledge (Wang, 2007). There are many useful applications about ESP curriculum in the field of work. For example, Lockwood (2011) studied ESP curriculum programs that focus on how applied linguistic research into the nature of call center communication breakdown in Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) sites such as in some developing countries, can impact English communications training program content and design for this industry. It mentions that a research-based approach to English for specific purpose (ESP) syllabus design and content will yield improved outcome.

Robinson (1980) states that ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching/learning of a foreign language for a clearly utilitarian purpose, and usually this utilitarian purpose is conceived of as successful performance in work, and work in which the English language plays an auxiliary role. (p. 48)

As it is known that China is a non-English speaking country, now students study English not just for the College Entrance Exam, from a long-term perspective, students can learn English and lay a good foundation for their occupational planning in the future. Research shows the impacts of the English learning and ESP and the advantages of ESP courses. Nevertheless, there are still some difficulties regarding ESP curriculum in China. Wang (2007) notes the first challenge we face in designing ESP courses is a careful

consideration of students' English level. A university English program is a precondition for ESP courses. The second challenge comes from the need of self-improvement of ELT instructors. They have to expand their knowledge of the English language and try to associate their linguistic skills with a specific domain or field. The third challenge is the open policy in China that brings in chances of cooperation with international counterparts as well. As a result, the present university English teaching is still examination-oriented rather than vocation-oriented, neglecting the cultivation of the students' competence of using English (Wang & Liao, 2010). General English is not enough to communicate throughout the world as far as technology is concerned. Developing ESP courses in the Chinese context is necessary if we really want to be involved in the international community. Also, limited resources show that ESP has a great influence on Chinese graduates' occupational development, especially for the graduates who work abroad after they finish their courses of study.

### **ESP Research in China**

Huang (2010) observes that with the deepening of China's foreign exchange, the industry of English learning, especially professional English requirements, are getting higher and higher. As a result, the professional university English curriculum has become the current domestic English teaching industry. According to Huang (2010), there are nine foreign language universities and foreign language colleges in China: Beijing Foreign Studies University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Xi'an International Studies University, Sichuan Foreign Language Institute, Tianjin Foreign Language Institute, Dalian Foreign Languages Institute, Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute, and People's Liberation Army Foreign Language College. In addition, Beijing Foreign Studies University and Shanghai Foreign Studies

University belong to the 211 Project, which are the top ranked universities in China. Sheng and Zhu (2010) note that in the era of knowledge economy and information economy globalization, and with the demand for talent in the market, these foreign language institutions focus more on concerns like foreign language training direction, foreign language curriculum, and foreign language teaching, especially English teaching. They also carry out the necessary reform that aims at cultivating the market competitiveness of the foreign language talents. G.F. Wang (2010) states that in 2003, in order to adapt to the 21st century national economic construction and social development of the needs of personnel training, the Ministry of Education started university English teaching reform and put forward the idea that university English curriculum design should pay attention to listening and speaking ability, as well as computer technology in university English. One of the influential results of teaching reform was to develop requirements in universities that teach English. Jin (2010) notes that in June 2008, the ESP Centre was established in Beijing, and the ESP Research Centre and the Law English Research Center were set up to complete the ESP teaching and research.

Ruan (2010) comments that although ESP is a branch of English language teaching, in China, “business English” is the most active and popular area of ESP. Business English is widely regarded as the well known ranch of ESP in China, and in recent years. As a result, it has generally integrated into courses for English majors, which are critical to cultivating foreign language compound talents. Zhu and Sheng (2010) assert that since the reform of open policy and continuous development of international business in China, Business English has developed quickly. Ruan (2010) notes business itself is an extremely broad concept and is also an interdisciplinary field that covers

knowledge for most fields, such as economics, trade, finance, transportation, investment, insurance, and management. Business English can be understood as a service for the purpose of two functions: they combine the practical and professional, and they engage in business activities and recognition. They also have a strong social function for communication. In addition, Li, Meng and Zhang (2010) argue that the goal of Business English professional training is to cultivate practical talent, but the current two-way choice of employment may cause some problems. This consequently requires colleges and universities to conduct research and make some changes regarding the current ESP curriculum, which will help their students meet the expected requirements in the highly competitive talent market.

Zhu and Sheng (2010) also state that there are usually three modes of ESP curriculum design in China. The first one is language-centered curriculum design, which establishes a direct connection between the target scenario and the ESP curriculum analysis. The second one is skill-centered curriculum design, and both of these two designs seem to be perfect because they are established from analyzing students' reaction. The third one is learning-centered curriculum design because it is commonly believed that ESP curriculum design should be adjusted to change according to the demands of resources.

G.F. Wang (2010) suggests that ESP is the direction of college English reform. The development of college English teachers change into the role of ESP teachers will become inevitable, and the quality of teachers is the key to determine the success of ESP teaching in China. Now, the ESP teaching is still insufficient among universities because the lack of ESP teaching theory related to the ESP study. Also, both professional teachers

and English teachers in China are wanting. English teachers may be experts in language, but are not necessarily experts in related professional fields, and some of them do not even have a basic knowledge of or practical experience in such fields. Y. Wang (2010) also points out that most English teachers do not understand the differences between ESP teaching and English for General Purposes teaching. The teachers in specific fields are familiar with the professional knowledge, which can make up for the shortage of English teachers. However, because they often lack language skills and may not know language teaching methods, they are often ineffective ESP teachers and may ignore the key points of ESP teaching. Thus, many professional teachers cannot help students master the language features and rules.

Ruan (2010) determined that, based on the concept that ESP as a teaching philosophy, its features are reflected as follows:

- (1) ESP curriculum design must meet the special needs of learners;
- (2) ESP curriculum content should be consistent with a specific discipline, occupation and activities;
- (3) ESP focuses on language, vocabulary, skills, and the adaptability of genre;
- (4) The methods of ESP teaching should be different from general English;
- (5) Learners have the advanced English level. As a result, the current ESP teachers should meet these criteria.

Y. Wang (2010) states that ESP teachers should have the dual qualities of language teachers which means a solid theoretical basis of language and the exploration of innovative spirit in the teaching process. Language quality is mainly composed of received knowledge and experimental knowledge. In addition to the higher level of

English, ESP teachers should also have a certain degree of relevant professional knowledge, and they should accumulate professional experience in relevant fields. Professional knowledge and professional practical experience are important conditions for ESP teachers to carry out effective teaching. Teachers should be able to conduct professional training, internship, employment organization, guidance, and teach students the knowledge and skills of related industries, such as marketing strategy and negotiation skills and social etiquette. As a result, Zhu and Sheng (2010) emphasize that it is necessary to train ESP teachers because they can learn not only some classroom language, but also some professional English teaching philosophy, more importantly they can change the current status of professional English teaching. The change of teaching methods is not only to adapt to the current social needs and meet the requirements of students, but also to give professional English teachers a guideline about ESP teaching, so an effective course design should thoroughly teach philosophy, be fully investigated, and take the needs of society and students into account. The method of task-teaching can be used to solve and avoid the problems of lacking professional skills in English teaching and improve students' interest as well as cultivate students' practical ability.

Cai (2016) observes that whether ESP can be the mainstream course of university English in China is still unknown in the future because it depends on the wisdom and courage of the decision-makers. From the moment of view, both the decision-makers and most of English teachers have a big misunderstanding about current ESP curriculum design and teaching. They think if students have a good foundation about English skills, they can conquer any questions in any fields. In fact, if we look forward to the future, we can predict that ESP will be the most practical field of Chinese foreign language teaching

because instead of putting national resources towards cultivating a large number of translators, it is better to improve English teaching for non-English majors, whose professional knowledge and professional fields are designed to ensure international competitiveness.

### **What's EOP**

ESP is traditionally divided into two main areas: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EAP involves pre-experience, simultaneous/in-service, and post-experience courses. These courses emphasize academic reading, writing, and language development. EAP programs, thus, are explicitly concerned with the skills and strategies in English that are needed for academic purposes within education systems (Fox, et al., 2014). In contrast, EOP involves pre-study, in-study, and post-study and is a school subject that is either independent or integrated. Pre-experience or pre-study courses will omit any specific work related to the actual discipline or work that students are not yet familiar with. The opportunity for specific or integrated work will be provided during in-service or in-study courses. EOP prepares students to employ English in three settings: pre-work situations, which are concerned with finding employment and interview skills; professional purposes, which include administration, medicine, law, and business; and vocational purposes for non-professionals in work, which may require language training for specific trades or occupations. Gong (2012) states that EOP teaching to satisfy students' English use in the workplace. EOP is a branch of ESP and is different from EAP, which aims to prepare learners to meet academic requirements. EOP best suits the needs and English level of vocational college students.



## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **The Role of Researcher**

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of current ESP curriculum in Chinese universities, one needs to understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human issue, which Creswell (2014) notes is the goal of qualitative research. Therefore, the current study employed a qualitative method, specifically a case study. According to Merriam (1998), case studies are used for investigating a single person, group, event or community. Typically, data are gathered from a variety of sources and by using several different methods like observations and interviews. Therefore, as to focus on individual meaning with respect to ESP teaching in Chinese universities. As the sole researcher in this study, it was important to tell readers that I graduated from a Chinese university and worked abroad from 2013-2014. This means that I have insights based on first-hand experience with the current ESP curriculum in Chinese universities, and I am also familiar with the situations my participants face when they work abroad. My research questions have been developed within my own work experience as one of those who has worked abroad after graduating from university, and my study and work experience has provided me with a thorough understanding about this research topic. Now, as a graduate student, I have the opportunity to collect raw data that can be transcribed and analyzed, which will allow me to determine trends and identify the issues faced by graduates of Chinese universities who work overseas after graduating.

### **Sampling Methods**

I used purpose sampling to choose my potential participants because it helped me intentionally select individuals and developed an understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). Because my research explores the influence of ESP

curriculum on Chinese universities and graduate's workforce, I chose some of my former colleagues as participants since they have graduated from Chinese universities, and they have worked in English-speaking countries approximately one year. Measuring the graduates' needs and evaluating the current ESP teaching in Chinese university are important to this research because I endeavour to use it to improve the ESP teaching in Chinese university and make recommendations to improve the current ESP curriculum to meet the students' needs in their jobs with regards to their language. These purposeful participants can help to develop a detailed understanding about this research and may provide useful information, as well as help people learn about the phenomenon: this is consistent with Creswell's (2015) evaluation of the value of qualitative research. Some of the sampling strategies may be used in this study such as maximal variation sampling, and it presents many perspectives of individuals to represent the issues in our world. Another sampling strategy that Creswell states is critical sampling which helps me to explore something that is outside this phenomenon (2015). For this research, these two strategies can help me to analyze and compare data based on different situations. In this research, all the participants were my friends, but I can not contact them directly, so a Facebook page was created and posted to recruit participants, then seven potential participants contacted me after recruitment page posted in the Facebook. A letter of information was sent for participants before each interviewing. If participants were willing to participate in my interview, they would be required to sign the Letter of Information and a Consent form before interviewing. After collected the consent forms, the researcher made an appointment with each participant to set up online interview, which was estimated to last 40 to 60 minutes.

## **Data Collection**

In addition to this sampling method, I used semi-structured interviews to conduct data collection. Creswell (2014) states that there are some advantages to interviews. For example, they allow the researcher to control over the line of questioning, and participants can provide information about their working experiences. Because all of my participants lived outside of Canada, and some of them lived in regions where telephone signal was limited, also it was difficult to conduct face-to-face interviews with them. To address this issue, I conducted online Skype interviews after I got their appropriate permission from each participant. During the telephone interviews, I used a high-quality recording device to record the interview and used a back-up recording device in case of the primary recording device failed. Creswell (2014) suggests that during the process of an interview, researchers should have a plan to develop and use an interview protocol for asking questions and recording the answers, as well as storing and sorting data. With respect to the interview protocol, I designed an information letter for participants to follow so each participant would know what they needed to do during the interview. With respect to storing and sorting data, I spent approximately two weeks collecting the interview data because after each interview, I gave a brief review of the recording, and I made some changes to the interview questions. Thus, I needed time to sort the data into different folders. I applied this method to collect response from participants and organized the data to answer the second and third research questions separately.

## **Data Coding**

Data coding was also a central component to the research process. According to Creswell (2014), “a methods discussion in a qualitative proposal needs also to specify the steps in analyzing the various forms of qualitative data” (p. 194). Since I collected data

via online Skype, I transcribed the audio data into a Microsoft Word file and categorize all files into different themes, which would then be analyzed and coded easily. Moreover, for the open-ended questions, I put all the similar answers together in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns that developed in response to the research questions. There were several procedures with respect to coding data, such as initially reading text data and then dividing the text into segments of information, labelling the segments of information with codes before reducing overlaps and redundancies in codes, as well as collapsing codes into themes (Creswell, 2015).

### **Ethical Issues and Confidentiality**

This study was approved by the university of Windsor's Research Ethics Board, and all the participants participated voluntarily and they were treated equally. Participants could also withdraw from the interview at any time by hanging up the Skype without any penalty because there is no obligation for them to answer any questions if they do not want to do so. All the data collection and analyzing procedures would protect the identity and confidentiality of participants and myself. As all the participants who graduated from the university are adults and they were over eighteen years old, the Research Ethics Board recognized them as individuals and could therefore represent themselves when participated in this research. I also realized that I should keep all of the recording devices in a secure area, as well as the Microsoft Word files in order to secure the confidentiality of participants, my research, and myself.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Finally, according to Gibbs, "qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and

different projects” (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 201). This research relies on credibility to show the consistency of the audiotape with the interpretation of the Microsoft Word documents. My prior work experience would enhance the credibility of the research, while the coding scheme will enhance the validity of the research. Since a sole researcher was conducting the research, and the same person coded the data, the research had a consistent approach applied throughout, after finished each coding, I sent A copy of the transcribed interview to each participant to ensure that was what exactly what they wanted to express, and made sure the validity of the research.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

After interviewing five Chinese graduates who worked in English-speaking countries for more or less than one year, the researcher collected enough data for this research. Before each interview, each participant was sent a short questionnaire that asked them what their major was, where and when they graduated, what English-related courses they took, how long they had been working, and how long they had been working abroad.

These questions were designed to provide background information from them. For example, knowing which English-related courses they took at university allowed the researcher to decide what kind of interview questions to ask them. This provided insights into what kind of ESP courses they took at their respective universities.

A transcription procedure followed each interview. Because questions were open-ended, a transcription was done immediately following the interview, which helped to organize data. This also highlighted potential issues with the interview questions so that they could be modified in the ensuing interviews so as to gather more precise data. Two participants were interviewed in Chinese because they were very busy, and they did not have enough time for interview, so they thought speaking by Chinese would be more efficient. In these cases, the work was both transcribed and translated. The translations were sent back to these participants to ensure the validity of the translation. To know what kind of impact ESP curriculum had on Chinese graduates in the workforce, it was necessary to explore how the graduates view the ESP curriculum at their university. When this was established, it allowed for a comparison between the influence of General English and ESP courses. Therefore, data was collected on eight key aspects:

1. Which courses they found most useful

2. Which courses they found least useful
3. What kind of challenges they experienced when working abroad
4. How they overcome language challenges
5. The differences between learning and application
6. Their opinions about universities' ESP courses
7. The advantages and disadvantages of current ESP curriculum
8. Their suggestions for ESP curriculum in Chinese universities

The analysis of the data is categorized into these eight aspects. To ensure the confidentiality of participants, the five participants will be referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 respectively. All the participants graduated from Chinese universities, each majored in English, and each had at least one year work experience in English-speaking countries.

### **English Courses Participants Took at University**

According to the small questionnaire, each participant listed the English courses they took at universities. P1 said that she took Advanced English, Reading, Oral English, Tourism English, Listening, Business English, Secretary English, British and American Culture. P2 stated that she had Business English Negotiation, Business English Correspondence, Listening, Speaking, and Reading. P3 noted that he took Comprehensive English, Listening Practice, Reading, Translation, British and American Literature. English Teaching Methods, General Psychology of English, and Business English. P4 took Garden English, Cambridge Business English Preliminary, and Intermediate and Higher English. P5 emphasized that he had Advanced English, Oral English, Tourism English, Reading, Listening, Business English, Secretary English, and British and American Literature. Most participants had some general English courses in

common, such as Listening, Reading, Speaking, Translation, and British and American Literature. Otherwise, they had ESP courses like Business English, Tourism English, and Secretary English.

### **The Most and Least Useful Courses in University**

All the participants have been working for four years, and they took at least twenty English courses at university. Among these courses, they found some were useful in their professional careers, particularly, Advance English, Listening, Interpretation, and Translation courses, as well as the Cambridge Business English course.

P1 stated that Advanced English, Listening, Interpretation and Translation were the most useful because it expanded her vocabulary and enhanced her listening, comprehension, and speaking skills. For example, she noted that Advance English gave her the tools to better understand sentences, academic or journal articles, and even novels. She observed that such skills were critical to understand the deeper meanings and implications of the language.

P1 also explained that during her work abroad, Advanced English helped improve her vocabulary. Vocabulary was critical for her, regardless of which grammar, listening, or dialect she was engaged with. However, it was of particular important to her professionally because her insufficient vocabulary prevented her from understanding what coworkers talked about. With a stronger vocabulary, even in at times when grammar was not clear, P1 would at least know what her coworkers said, even if she did not understand the meaning entirely.

While P1 underscored the importance of Advanced English, P2 suggested that the Listening course was most crucial to her work. P2 noted that though she found the Speaking course useful, despite the fact that it was only held once a week—the course



was limited with respect to retention and was therefore not as effective as the Listening course. She stated that in the Listening class, the instructor gave the students many instructions, which provided them with essential experience. The instructor also provided some websites that offered listening exercises. P2 concluded that the numerous skills learned in the Listening class led to rapid growth in ability and proved useful in the work environment as it facilitated communication.

Moreover, P2 emphasized that Listening was more useful for the exams, such as the Business English Certificate (BEC) exam and the Test for English Major- Band 8 (TEM-8). She noted that, though not all English majors want to become English teachers, what learned from listening class had practical applications in a variety of fields. Both P1 and P2 found that the Listening class had important, practical applications, though P1 also valued her other English courses were. Though their respective evaluations of the courses differ, both participants believed that communication was central in their profession environments, and that these courses helped them improve their communication skills.

Though the Advanced English, Listening, and Speaking courses each had value, P3 and P5 each found that their Translation courses were the most useful. P3 stated that translation was essential for his professional career, which required him to translate significant amounts of theory to help him improve his logical reasoning. This allowed him to demonstrate his ability to express himself using English idioms. He found that making his meaning clear was a priority within a work setting. Consequently, upon graduation, he found that the lessons he learned in the Translation course gave him the tools he needed to express himself clearly when using English.

Though P5 found the Translation course the most helpful in his particular work setting, he also noted that it was difficult to suggest which course was the most useful as he often drew on a multiplicity of courses depending on the occasion. However, the Translation courses were particularly useful because most of his colleagues, including supervisors, could not understand English. Therefore, he needed to translate for them on a daily basis, and leaned heavily on the skillset developed during the Translation course. This skill made him an important asset to his company.

Of all of the participants, only P4 prioritized Cambridge Business English above the other courses with respect to its application in the professional sphere. After he graduated, most of P4's work was related to international trading, and the Business English courses gave him a basic understanding of international transactions. Thus, this class prepared him for the detailed nuances of his professional career and proved more valuable to him than the other English courses.

Though the participants collectively prioritized different English courses, they were generally consistent with respect to the outcomes they valued: communication skills. Though P1 and P2 valued the Advance English, Speaking, and Listening courses, and P3 and P5 valued the Translation courses, all four agreed that what these courses provided them with was the ability to communicate effectively in a professional setting. It was only P4 who valued an outcome outside of communication, and the Cambridge Business English course taught him more practical elements applicable to his chosen profession.

According to the participants, some of the courses they took at universities proved to have less practical applications, namely the British and American Literature course, the culture courses, and the Gardening/Landscape course.

The majority of the participants believed that the course British and American Literature was the least useful one in their universities. However, their reasons were varied. P4 stated that in his British and American Literature class, students were simply asked to read novels. He believed that if students were interested in novels, they could read it by themselves. As P1 noted several issues: there was an overreliance on films, information about the movies covered in class were readily available on the internet, and students had varying tastes in movies. Thus, she concluded that the class was more about personal interests and therefore she did not learn anything in the class. P2 also noted that her British and American Literature course(s) proved to be of little practical value. The assessment structure of the course required her to remember trivial fact, and so to pass these tests she memorized them; however, she did not come away with a thorough comprehensive of Western culture.

P2 found that the culture class failed to impart any practical information. Though she does concede that having a strong cultural understanding is useful in a work setting, the class simply did not cover enough information to make it worthwhile. Whether in the culture class, or the British and American Literature class, the specifics of culture simply did not immerse. After she decided to work abroad, she did some online search for specific areas of culture and background, and these proved more useful than what she learned from literature and culture classes. Likewise, P5 found the content of the culture course impractical at work. He observed that he never used any culture knowledge because he seldom talked about literature with local English speakers, and none of his coworkers were interested in *King Lear* or *The Old Man and the Sea*, or any other pieces of classic

literature that they covered. Although British and America Literature offered insights into British and American culture, none of it proved valuable in a work setting.

Perhaps the least practical course was the Gardening/Landscape class. P4 stated that upon entering the workforce, he struggled to find any applicable uses for the material “Because almost nobody in China would connect English and Gardening together.” Though he conceded that learning how to garden did have practical uses, most Chinese students were not interested in gardening and did not see a connection between it and English. However, his university made the Gardening/Landscape class compulsory, and it seemed that the administrators never considered the practical value of the course. This is because that farmer was not a good job in China. Nobody wanted to be a farmer if he had a choice, and there was very little international business between farmers and the outside. Usually farmers grew vegetables on the earth or in the greenhouse and then this product was sold to the local market.

Although every participant held a different opinion about which course was the least useful one, each expressed concern that administrators had an agenda with respect to design courses that was unclear to them. Because administrators failed to clarify the value of such courses and did not care about students’ input, the participants failed to see the applicable value of these courses within a professional setting, some of which were compulsory.

### **The Biggest Challenges at Work and Solutions of Language Challenges**

Each participant met some challenges when she/he was first assigned a job abroad. Most participants mentioned that African accents were the most significant challenge at the beginning of their work. P5, who worked in Liberia, said that the issue he encountered “was local people’s pronunciation, tone and localism.” For instance, in the

days following his arrival in Liberia, he struggled to “fully understand what [coworkers] were talking about.” He recalled attending a job recruitment ... approximately two weeks after his arrival where he “could not understand what they were saying”. He said this was especially true of the elder interviewees: “they had a strong tone and [spoke] too many dialects”. Thus, because much of the English he learned was based on British and American English, the nuances of the language that he had become accustomed to were difficult to apply to this setting.

P5 emphasized that in his university, he had a pronunciation course that instructed him on common/prescribed British or American pronunciation. Consequently, he was not familiar with that various pronunciations common in the African English dialects employed by the people in the community in which he worked. Although the pronunciation course he took in university was useful, it was limited as the pronunciations taught in the course were only employed in some English-speaking countries, like Canada, America, and Britain.

P1, P2, and P3 had similar experiences. P1 thought that people in Liberia had accents that were significantly different from those that she had learned in class. As English was not her native tongue, she was usually not as knowledgeable as the native speakers with respect to the language. Additionally, because she had only learned the prescribed British or American pronunciations, like P5, she initially struggled to understand the various dialects of English in Africa. Consequently, she often needed to repeat what she thought they had said several times to confirm their meaning. Facing a similar situation, P2 recalled that she could only understand about 70% of what local people were talking at beginning of her arrival to Liberia. P3 struggled even more and

could only understand about 30% of the local dialects in Liberia. Although P1, P2, and P3 had taken the pronunciation course, it proved ineffective in their respective contexts, and each required approximately two months to become accustomed to the local dialects of the regions they worked in.

In contrast, P4 stated that cultural difference was the biggest challenge during his work in Africa. He observed that cultural groups in various countries have different ways of conceptualizing a problem and different social practices, concluding that “The only way to overcome that was to communicate and get one point that could be accepted by both sides.” Some of these differences manifest themselves in the ways people interact. For example, in China, which is generally a homogenous civilization where racialized identities seldom become an issue, people are socialized to accept hierarchal structures. Thus, students listen to teachers, and employees follow employers without questions. P4 said that in Liberia, the history of American slavery and colonization have reinforced notions of inequality based on perceived raceism. Thus, workers are sure to demand that they are treated fairly and often challenge those who are in positions of authority when issues of equality pertaining to race may be involved. These conflicting perceptions have become an issue for P4 when he used his company’s truck to transfer local workers to different work sites. P4 and his fellow Chinese workers sat in the cab of the truck, and he had the workers sit in the back of the truck as the cab did not have enough seats for each of them. The workers claimed that P4 and the other Chinese employees were discriminating against them. They then requested to seat in the front seats. Though the Chinese employees did not intend to offend or discriminate against the local workers, it became clear to them that perceptions of fairness were more important than respecting

hierarchies, and so a compromise needed to be made. In the process, both sides taught the other about their respective customs, and a compromise was arranged.

Different participants used different ways to overcome challenges related to language, but P1's approach effectively summarizes the collective approaches: "ask more, listen more, speak more, and read more." This was an effective way to learn dialects or solve problems. P2 notes that to overcome her language barriers, she "just talked more with local people." As she spoke with them more, she learned about the topics they preferred to speak on, and also became accustomed to their pronunciations to the point where she could quickly discern "what others were talking about." This also allowed her to find common ground with them so that she could speak with them about familiar topics.

This was consistent with the approach applied by P3. He thought the only thing that he could do was to talk more, listen more, and practice communicating more with local people. Though he was unable to immediately learn the African dialects he encountered, after about two months, he found that he was familiar with it. At the beginning, he could only understand half of what local people were talking; and after one month, it reached 70%; and after two months, he could understand 90%. Thus, the more he engaged with those around him, the more his language skills improved.

P4 had a similar approach, but also employed specific strategies. For example, when he arrived in Liberia, he "worked with local people," and to ensure they understood him, he "just spoke slowly and told the other party to repeat the thing that." he did not understand. This was a common strategy with those who spoke quickly. He had a slightly easier time speaking with workers who had post-secondary education, as their

pronunciation conformed to the standards he had learned, and they could also speak slowly, which made it easier for him to understand. When he came upon somebody who spoke neither Chinese nor English, he “would try to find someone who knew the local language to interpret.” However, when that failed, he simply relied on body language or drawings to make himself understood. For those people he struggled to understand, he decided to rely on text-messaging to communicate: because the words were written clearly in the text, and avoided listening to an unfamiliar dialect, he was able to understand them more easily.

P5 had a slightly different approach. He simply convinced himself to become immersed in language. This meant talking directly with local people, whether they were security guards, drivers, or the people who came to the yard to play soccer with him. One of the soccer players even gave him a local storybook, and it helped him a little to understand local dialects. He found this immersion to be helpful.

### **Differences between Learning and Application and Opinions about ESP Courses**

No matter how practical some university courses had been, the participants definitely agreed that there were differences between course learning and application that they had to accommodate for. For example, participants had pronunciation courses at their universities, and the current education curriculum system only taught them popular pronunciation instead of variant pronunciations, such as Africa English, Indian English, Japanese English. P2 conceded that it was pragmatic of the university she attended to teach standard British or American pronunciations so that students can develop a strong understanding of the language; however, she also noted that it would be beneficial to design a multi-pronunciation courses. Though the class she took did have an instructor who was familiar with Indian English, and though the instructor did offer some form of



preparation, “the teacher only taught [students] some basic knowledge instead of teaching [students] how to pronounce” Indian English. P2 concludes that “This knowledge could.....help [students] to distinguish the different pronunciations.” Thus, P2 recommended that universities design a mix or multi-pronunciation course that could help students learn more.

The most important thing was that what P2 learned in class was not enough for her job, and she explained that because the knowledge was updated so frequently. She could learn how to write the correct format for emails in class, but she still needed to think about the right one when she used this knowledge to her work, so application should be based on working environment. There were more than 40 students in each class in every university so that the university did not have enough funding to let every student practise what they learned from class to the real work situation which means the connection between learning and application was not close.

P2 also explained that the work-specific content that she learned in class did not prepare her adequately for a position in her profession because the knowledge in her field was updated so frequently. P4 had the same opinion. He stated that what he learned from class was not current enough as the textbooks’ content was out of date and most of knowledge from textbooks was no longer applicable. Because the textbooks for his class were not updated every year, the only practical information he received was the most basic knowledge in his field. After he got a job, he needed to continuously learn while working.

Participants have varying opinions concerning ESP courses in their university, and these opinions were often shaped by the chosen field of work. Consequently, some participants seemed dismissive of the ESP courses, while others saw great value in them.

P3 and P1 both expressed concern that the content of the ESP courses was not applicable in the fields where they worked. For instance, P3 stated that the content of the business class was not useful during his time in Africa. Likewise, P1 stated that the courses simply did not provide her with the tools to excel in her field. Though she took ESP courses, she observed that she had never used what she had learned after graduating. She also noted that there were not enough jobs in the fields related to the ESP courses. If her work was related exclusively to translation, there would be no link between the ESP courses and her job. Thus, when looking for jobs upon graduation, it was easier to find employment in fields that were not directly related to ESP courses, like business or tourism.

Even students who found employment in ESP related fields were doubtful of their practical value. For instance, P1 took an English tourism course in university and became a tour guide after graduating; however, she reported only having used some of the knowledge from the course and stated that most of the tourism information was not and likely could not be covered by textbooks. P3 also noted that even though he currently works in a business company, he found that the business English course was not helpful because the theory was not clearly linked with real-world applications. He suggested that if the theory is not framed in a way that can be applied in practice, “then students cannot understand it.” He goes on to specify that unless students have worked in foreign business trade, it will be difficult for them to understand their professional obligations

and expectations. For students who major in foreign trade, he suggests that the best way to learn is through an internship that provides them access to the practical, day-to-day experience that will be truly valuable to them. Thus, P3 concludes that the course content is limited, and only an internship can prepare students to adapt quickly to their professional expectations in such fields.

Also, P2 strongly believed that Business English was not particularly helpful for her job. P2's Business English teacher used to work in a business company and therefore had strong field knowledge and was good at English; however, she had been a teacher for a long time, and what she taught was not the most current information because she had been out of the field for so long.

However, P4 and P5 hold the opinion that the ESP courses were useful. P4 thought the most useful course was Business English, and the Cambridge Business English course could be divided into three levels: primary, intermediate, and higher. For him, the knowledge from the primary part was simple, and Cambridge Business English Intermediate and Higher were important for his work because Cambridge Business English Intermediate equipped him with some basic understanding of business words and some business information while Cambridge Business English Higher provided him with knowledge about how to operate a company and how a company was organized, which was practical information in his profession. P5 stated that ESP courses did help. For example, he was often required to translate business emails for his supervisors, which called upon his knowledge from Business English class. As for Tourism English and Secretary English, it helped him to solve some problems in certain fields, like when booking an airplane to foreign countries. Although he only used a little knowledge from

ESP courses, he still believed that it was meaningful to set up these courses in universities.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of ESP Courses**

Although ESP courses were not applicable to some participants' work, it still offered advantages. For example, P1 noted that English majors knew more knowledge than other students from ESP courses or students who had been learning English for a long time, but they could seldom speak like local English speakers. Therefore, the knowledge offered in ESP courses helped to extend their scope of knowledge. What they learned from ESP classes equipped them with sufficient knowledge for their respective professions, and P2 also felt that ESP courses could provide a platform for students to learn more knowledge related to the real work situations, thereby teaching students specific knowledge about their given field. Likewise, P3 found ESP courses were more formal than ordinary English courses, and P5 believed that ESP courses helped students develop basic skills required for certain professions. For example, Business English helped students to learn how to answer an inquiry in foreign trade job.

When asked about the disadvantages of ESP courses, participants had a lot of input as they were generally dissatisfied with them. P1 thought that students took a lot of English or ESP courses in university, but because they only learned some specific knowledge about their fields, the students were seldom proficient at any aspects of English. For example, they were not experts in vocation like tourism or secretary because they did not learn enough relevant knowledge from their ESP courses. Likewise, P2 stated that after students graduated, they would find what they learned from the textbooks was not enough for their work, and a lot of knowledge was not covered by their textbooks.

Though their textbooks could teach them some basic knowledge, the course content did not have enough connections with their future work. P3 emphasized this issue:

There were some stereotypes in Business English learning. Language was the preferred communication tool. In addition to Business English, students could also learn from other courses. Although business English helped students learn about topics such as hospitality, etiquette, and thinking, there was no need to set up it alone because what students needed was to learn in a real work environment. They needed to combine textbooks with practice.

Building on this, P3 stated that most teachers think it was unnecessary to have internships to connect ESP courses with the relevant work, and they just taught from the textbooks. Comprehensive English teachers did not know much about field knowledge, so they focused on English teaching. Some Business English teachers did not have any business experience, and P3 also thought that most universities paid insufficient attention to internship because they did not know how their students choose their future job. Both P3 and P4 noted that though most of ESP teachers excelled at English after having taught it since they graduated, they lacked practical, real-world knowledge about the professions that students would be entering. P4 succinctly framed this position: “teachers only knew English, and they didn’t understand the field knowledge they were teaching.” Moreover, he notes that what knowledge they did have was not current enough and only offered basic field knowledge. P4 likewise suggested that this was a deficiency in school administrators as well, concluding that because the textbooks and curriculum were out of date, students needed to learn more to meet their professions requirements.

## **Suggestions for ESP Curriculum in Chinese Universities**

Each participant offered suggestions on how to improve the ESP curriculum. For example, P1 noted that it would be better for universities to cultivate some students who were experts in some specific fields. According to students' interests or preferences, students could choose/focus on one or two aspects to learn more and become experts in these fields. It would help them secure employment in their fields. This means that they could focus on one or two branches of ESP courses, and they could still take some courses they were interested in. She believed that if they were good enough in English or any ESP aspects, they could succeed in the future.

P2 suggested that universities need to cooperate with the local companies to provide students with internships to supplement the students' in-class lesson and demonstrate how their knowledge applies in the field. She went on to suggest that universities should ensure that each student has time to attend an internship, and their instructors should follow-up with the internship and get feedback from the students and companies. Such internships might also count as a course. The teachers' feedback can be used to improve the ESP curriculum. Student learning cannot rely entirely on textbooks to acquire the knowledge: they need to learn it and apply it to the real work.

Building on the notion of practical experience, P3 suggested that universities should have more practical actions of real-world applications. Such actions can help students get more practice so that they are prepared when they work for an actual company. For example, she recommended letting students who are majoring in Tourism English to go to travel companies for internship or stay with tour groups for a few months, while students majoring in Business English should go to foreign trade companies for

internship. These internships can provide real work experience, which students cannot learn from textbooks. P3 also stated that students should get credits for these internships.

P5 likewise advocated an increase in on-site training and learning, rather than learning everything in the classroom with outdated textbooks. For example, he stated that universities should network with local travel agencies and have students, who are majoring in Tourism English, follow their travel guides and lead some foreign tour groups. He thinks these kinds of activities will be more interesting and welcomed by university students, and that it would allow students to apply the knowledge learned in class to real work situations. He argues that this “life teaching” is essential because students need to learn more from life and work, not just textbooks.

This concern about the content knowledge of outdated textbooks was echoed by P4, who proposed that universities should have some teachers who know specific knowledge in relevant fields, and these teachers should be proficient in English instead, and that English teachers should not be offering instruction in every subject. Thus, he suggested that ESP curriculum should have someone who is both an expert in the field, and English. P4 went on to state the universities must recruit ESP teachers who possess a balance between field knowledge and English skills. He went on to postulate that most English teachers begin teaching after graduating and consequently do not develop any relevant field knowledge. Thus, teachers are only transferring textbook content to their students. Moreover, he observed that because textbooks are as old as ten years, and the content is not current.

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The current study explores the influence of the ESP curriculum on Chinese graduates' career. To this end, it is necessary to discuss the implications of the study's findings as well as its limitations so as to assess approaches that can be employed to improve Chinese universities' ESP learning programs. This includes a discussion of the graduates' mixed views on the usefulness of the courses, the language challenges they each experienced when they started working abroad, and the suggestions for improving the ESP curriculum in China. This conversation is best ordered using the study's four research questions:

1. What is the relationship between English for specific purposes courses and Chinese graduates' workforce?
2. What kind of language challenges do Chinese university graduates face during their first week and month when working abroad?
3. How useful do participants find ESP courses as it relates to their workforce?
4. What recommendations do participants suggest in order to improve ESP curriculum in Chinese universities?

### **Relationship between ESP and Chinese Graduates' Workforce**

As Zhang (2011) states, universities have their own English curriculum, and for English major students, their English curriculum emphasizes courses like Advanced English, Translation, Business English, and English Literature. This is why most participants felt that courses related to regular English courses like advanced English, Listening, and Translation were most useful. This happens because Chinese universities pay more attentions to normal English courses, while ESP courses are different in different universities, and there is no standard for how many ESP courses universities



should set up, or what kind of ESP courses universities should choose. Thus, the findings also demonstrate that each participant's ESP courses were different and that there is a lack of consistency from school to school and from major to major.

There is no direct relation between ESP and Chinese graduates' career, because as Strevens (1988) notes, ESP emphasizes the English language that meet specific learning needs that relate to work. However, according to the findings, some participants think it is difficult to decide what kind of profession they are going to enter before completing their studies, and curriculum design in universities focus on some general directions. Although ESP courses do help in some respects, the selection of ESP courses is limited. It appears that none of the universities give much consideration to these courses and treat them as compulsory courses for English major students. As a mandatory course, English has a great impact on Chinese education because some English courses help students develop future interest about their job, and this helps students understand that what they learn at universities will be useful to their future profession (Gong, 2012). In real-world situations, a course's usefulness depends on what kind of profession students enter because not every student will find a position in the field they studied in. The relationship between ESP and Chinese graduates' professions is complex, but ESP does play a role in their education. Additionally, the function of ESP courses is to cultivate students' abilities so that they can meet job requirements (Rautenbach et al., 2017); thus, ESP courses have different goals, contents, and purposes (Wang, 2007).

### **Accent and Culture Differences**

According to Matsuura, Chiba, Mahoney, and Rilling (2014), a less familiar accent, such as African dialect is more difficult for students to understand than a more familiar North American English accent. That means accents can be critical to daily

communication in the workplace. Each of the participants in this study worked in Africa for an extended period of time, and in this setting, accents posed a difficult problem upon their arrival. Although every university has pronunciation courses, none of the universities have pronunciation courses that cover Africa English or India pronunciations. This means the ESP curriculum design does not cover this important factor. As Gong (2012) states, course design should be based on the analysis of job requirements, so it can improve students' ability to meet the demands of the job market. Some participants proposed designing multi-pronunciations courses to help students learn more about various job markets. Given this demand, the current ESP curriculum should take this into consideration.

As for culture differences, Wang (2011) notes that language is a part of and shaped by culture: it plays a vital role in the development of culture, and without language, culture would not be available. Most of the participants in the current study found that British and American Literature was not useful for their work, but they still note that culture differences are the big problem at the beginning of working abroad. This is mainly because the reasoning and logic in China is different from many Western countries, which may be rooted in culture. However, culture is not a concrete entity, and participants all have their own opinions about this.

### **Review ESP Courses**

When asked about the usefulness of their ESP courses, most participants observed that though it was helpful in some situations, its usefulness depended on their jobs. If their jobs were related to the relevant ESP fields, they found the ESP courses more helpful than they would have anticipated. However, some still doubt the dated knowledge in their ESP textbooks, so most participants did find that the ESP courses adequately

prepared them for the requirements they were tasked with in the professional sphere. The current study's participants confirmed the findings of Hua and Beverton (2013) as they stated that they thought their English courses would provide them with knowledge relevant to their professions. However, the English courses they took failed to equip them for their future employment. In response to this, participants outlined several problems with the ESP curriculum that may impede its practicality and effectiveness. As mentioned by Wang (2007), there are three major problems with the current ESP curriculum in China:

- Students' English level
- The ESP teachers' self-improvement
- Favouring exam-oriented approaches over vocation-oriented approaches

In this study, participants reported that some courses helped them secure high examination marks. Additionally, many ESP teachers are not qualified to be ESP teachers because they are only expert in English and not an additional specialized field. This finding certainly echoes the sentiment that Y. Wang (2010) points out: most English teachers do not understand the differences between ESP teaching and English for General Purposes teaching. Though the teachers in specific fields are familiar with the professional knowledge, which can make up for the shortage of English teachers, they often lack language skills and may not know language teaching methods. Thus, they are often ineffective ESP teachers and may ignore the key points of ESP teaching. As a result, many professional teachers cannot help students master the language features and rules. This demands a change in staff training in universities.

### **Co-op or Internship**

Each participant suggested that universities should put more credits on Co-op or Internship, which may help students learn about applicable, professional expectations. They repeatedly asserted that what they learned in class was not enough to prepare them for their professional duties. The biggest problem graduates faced was their lack of work experiences, which put them at a disadvantage when competing for professional positions. According to Xiong (2011), the development of higher vocational education in China is rapid, and almost every vocational college involves some form of internship or co-op for their students: these programs help students to find a job more quickly.

### **Chapter Summary**

An increasing number of graduates choose to work abroad, and the participants in this research stressed some challenges that they have experienced when working abroad. Because their university education did not adequately prepare them for their future professions, it is clear that these challenges were not addressed by the ESP curriculum. Although their experience may be limited in Africa, it still provides some insights that are applicable in education.

Most of their opinions can be used as the basis for suggestions concerning future ESP curriculum design, especially with respect to the tools future students require to overcome the language challenges they will face and which cannot be ignored.

Each of the participants made recommendations regarding how to improve Chinese ESP curriculum so that it can more effectively prepare students for their professions. Most believed that co-op or internships are the best way to teach students how to apply what they learned in class into a professional context. After a co-op

placement or internship, students will have a clear understanding as to their deficiencies and will be able to establish learning goal.

### **Limitations of the Research**

This case study only involved five participants, each of whom only had common work experience in Africa. This may have been the source of the cultural and pronunciation issues that participants struggled with. In addition, two participants (P1 and P5) graduated from same university, so there are limited implications due to a lack of diversity among the universities studied, which may in turn not cover most ESP curriculum. Therefore, this research may not be representative of all the Chinese ESP curriculum. Moreover, the participants in the study only shared one common course: Business English. Thus, the study was not able to collect data on a wide range of courses. However, this lack of overlapping course enrollment meant that the study was unable to compare and validate many of the observations each participant offered on the courses that were unique to them. Finally, participants' personalities may also have influence on their job-selection, which may not be shaped by ESP curriculum.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The current study's findings identify issues concerning China's current ESP curriculum, and provides some practical suggestions that administrators and educators in universities might consider when making changes to ESP curriculum design. This means that administrators need to consider the usefulness of courses with respect to professional aspirations, and the significant challenges students will face at work, especially upon their arrival abroad. To answer these questions, some other factors should be taken into the consideration of the ESP curriculum design, and these questions can help educators consider what students require. These requirements can then be integrated into future

ESP curriculum, which will help build a more practical and comprehensive ESP curriculum. This will benefit students and the companies work for. However, for future research, it can focus on the influence of the ESP courses on non-English major graduates' career because this study only emphasizes the importance of ESP courses on English major graduates. Additionally, future research can also cover the work places like other countries which may draw a more vivid picture of the influence of ESP courses.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Consent form



[Interview]

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### **Title of Study: Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Fang Lin**, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Results from this study will provide useful information for the design of ESP programs in Chinese universities, which will help universities students meet the expected requirements in the highly competitive talent market.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Fang Lin at [lin111c@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lin111c@uwindsor.ca), or Dr. Zhang at [zuochen@uwindsor.ca](mailto:zuochen@uwindsor.ca).

##### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to have an in-depth understanding of how current ESP curriculum influence Chinese graduates' career

##### PROCEDURES

Research data will be collected through face to face online interview, and it will be about 40-60 minutes.

After you contact the researcher that you are interested in this research, you need to send the researcher your email and Skype or Wechat information.

A letter of information will be sent to you before interviewing. If you are willing to participate in this interview, you will be required to sign the Letter of Information and a Consent form, and an audio taping consent form before interviewing, and send it back to the researcher by email.

After collecting the consent forms, the researcher will make an appointment with you to set up online interview time. The researcher will borrow a single study room in Leddy Library, you will be required to find a personal or private room to have interview without any distractions by others.

After each interview, your Skype or Wechat information will be deleted immediately.

After the researcher transcribes the interview, the transcript will be sent to you by email. You will have the opportunity to edit your transcripts to make sure your perspectives are accurately represented, once the researcher receives the feedback transcript, your email information will be deleted immediately.

#### POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You may be uncomfortable discussing personal experiences regarding to educational training. Please feel free to skip questions or stop the interview at any time. Also, your interview content will be kept confidential, and your identity will be confidential.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits for you as a participant, but the researcher will summarize the information, and send it back to Chinese universities, so this research will contribute to the development of ESP curriculum in the future. According to this research, the researcher will summarize the information and send it to Chinese universities, so the researcher can establish some recommendations on current ESP curriculum in Chinese universities and administrators or teachers can alter and improve about current teaching practices, objectives and curriculums to meet the needs of students' workforce.

#### COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

For your participation, you will eligible to receive an equal to 20 Canadian dollars Starbucks gift card. You may keep the compensation if you decide to withdraw after the case study starts.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

You are required to find a private room that other people can't hear or bother you during the interview, and your identities will be protected by not mentioning your names, schools, and your working addresses in any of the reports.

Audio recordings will be transferred to the researcher's password protected computer and transcribed in the researcher's office, identities will be removed. With respect to data storage, privacy and confidentiality will be protected by securely storing collected information in the locked file cabinets. One years after finalizing data collection all material data will be shredded; digital audio files will be deleted; and the electronic files will be permanently deleted from the computers.

#### PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can withdraw up to 1 week after your online interview. If you withdraw, the information and the data you provided will be immediately deleted

You have the right to edit the transcript, and you can't withdraw after you send back your edit transcript.

#### FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The findings of this study will be made available to the participants by posting an executive summary of the study on the University of Windsor REB website (<http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb>).

Date when results are available: April 30, 2018.

#### SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in Fang's thesis, subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

#### SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix B: Letter of information



[Interview]

### LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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After the researcher transcribes the interview, the transcript will be sent to you by email. You will have the opportunity to edit your transcripts to make sure your perspectives are accurately represented, once the researcher receives the feedback transcript, your email information will be deleted immediately.

#### POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You may be uncomfortable discussing personal experiences regarding to educational training. Please feel free to skip questions or stop the interview at any time. Also, your interview content will be kept confidential, and your identity will be confidential.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits for you as a participant, but the researcher will summarize the information, and send it back to Chinese universities, so this research will contribute to the development of ESP curriculum in the future. According to this research, the researcher will summarize the information and send it to Chinese universities, so the researcher can establish some recommendations on current ESP curriculum in Chinese universities and administrators or teachers can alter and improve about current teaching practices, objectives and curriculums to meet the needs of students' workforce.

#### COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

For your participation, you will eligible to receive an equal to 20 Canadian dollars Starbucks gift card. You may keep the compensation if you decide to withdraw after the case study starts.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

You are required to find a private room that other people can't hear or bother you during the interview, and your identities will be protected by not mentioning your names, schools, and your working addresses in any of the reports.

Audio recordings will be transferred to the researcher's password protected computer and transcribed in the researcher's office, identities will be removed. With respect to data storage, privacy and confidentiality will be protected by securely storing collected information in the locked file cabinets. Two years after finalizing data collection all material data will be shredded; digital audio files will be deleted; and the electronic files will be permanently deleted from the computers.

#### PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can withdraw up to 1 week after your online interview. If you withdraw, the information and the data you provided will be immediately deleted.

You have the right to edit the transcript, and you can't withdraw after you send back your edit transcript.

#### FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The findings of this study will be made available to the participants by posting an executive summary of the study on the University of Windsor REB website (<http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb>).

Date when results are available: April 30, 2018.

#### SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in Fang's thesis, subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

#### SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [**Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career**] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix C: Consent of audio taping form**



[Interview]

**CONSENT OF AUDIO TAPING FORM**

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

**Title of Study: Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career**

The purpose of this study is to have an in-depth understanding of how current ESP curriculum influence Chinese graduates' career.

I hereby give permission to Fang Lin to digitally record interview conversation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D: Guided interview questions



### [Guided Interview Questions]

1. Among the courses you took at university, which ones did you find most useful for your work?
2. What courses you took at university did you find least useful at work? Can you tell me why?
3. What were the biggest challenges you experienced at work, especially when you first assigned a job abroad?
4. How did you overcome language challenges at work abroad?
5. Can you tell me the advantages and disadvantages of the ESP curriculum at your university?
6. What suggestions do you have for ESP curriculum in Chinese universities?

**Appendix E: Recruitment flyer**



[Recruitment Flyer]

**We are currently recruiting participants for the study:**

**Exploring the Influence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum on Chinese Graduates' Career**

**Open to Chinese university graduates over 18 years old who majored in English as an undergraduate in China. You may also have at least one-year overseas work experience.**

**Participants who participate in the study are eligible to receive an equal to 20 Canadian dollars Starbucks gift card.**

If you would like further information, please contact:

**Fang Lin: [lin111c@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lin111c@uwindsor.ca)**

**Indicate: This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.**

## Appendix F: Contact information



[contact information]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the Participant):

Thank you for your interest in my research.

The purpose of this study is to explore how current ESP curriculum influence Chinese graduates' career. The research will adopt online interview with WeChat, which will last approximately 40 to 60 minutes. If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will send you a consent form and a letter of information, and audio taping consent form, and you will be asked to sign it and sent it back to me with your Skype or Wechat information.

To protect your privacy, please find a quiet room to participate in this interview to avoid any distractions or being overheard by others.

For your participation, you will receive an equal to 20 Canadian dollars Starbucks gift card. You may keep the compensation if you decide to withdraw after the case study starts.

Best regards,

Fang Lin

## Appendix G: Online research checklist



[Research Ethical Board]

<b>Online Research Checklist</b>			
<b>RESEARCH CONDUCTED VIA THE INTERNET MUST PROVIDE THE SAME LEVEL OF PROTECTION AS ANY OTHER KIND OF RESEARCH</b>			
Briefly explain why this project is using Online Research: Because most of my potential participants are outside of Canada and China, and it is difficult for researcher to interview face by face.			
1.1	Select the recruitment methods being utilized. (Check all that apply.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Websites/Internet advertising <input type="checkbox"/> Listserv <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology Participant Pool <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail solicitation UWindsor <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail solicitation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Networking Site posting (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
1.2	Are these recruitment methods publicly available? If not, attach a letter of support from the site/server owner to use these methods/sites for recruitment purposes.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
2.1	Does this study make use of an internet survey service (e.g., Fluid Surveys, UWindsor, and Survey Monkey)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Skip to question #3) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (answer the following questions)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
2.2	What is the name of the internet survey service? Please provide the URL for this service and the survey.		
2.3	Where is the server located?		
3.1	Does this study make use of an academic internet participant pool?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Skip to question #4) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (answer the question 'a' and, if not using the UWindsor Psychology Participant Pool, provide a Letter of Support or an REB approval)	
3.2	a. What is the name of the Pool?		
4.1	State the location of the advert/notice/flyer(s) and provide verbatim copies	Facebook page will be posted to recruit participants. Potential participants will contact researcher after recruitment page posted in the Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
5.1	What type of data will be collected? (Check all that apply.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Surveys/Questions <input type="checkbox"/> Email Correspondence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chat Room/Social Networking Site Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin Board Posting(s) <input type="checkbox"/> LMS/CLEW <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
6.1	How will the data be stored?	<input type="checkbox"/> On a secure server	<input type="checkbox"/>



	(Check all that apply.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On a non-networked computer <input type="checkbox"/> PI's personal computer <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted file <input type="checkbox"/> In a secure campus office <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	N/A
7. 1	Who will have access to the server and data?	Researcher and Dr. Zhang will have the access to the data	
8.1	Describe the Confidentiality Plan for the data.	Data will be saved to a non-networked computer, and only researcher and her supervisor have the access to the data.	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
8.2	Describe the length of time the data will be kept and the process of disposal.	All the data will be kept for two years.	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
9. 1	How will informed consent be obtained? (Check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Information Sheet with "check box" for consent <input type="checkbox"/> Email with name <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Implied through submitting information <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
10. 1	Will participants be reminded to "print" the letter of information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes and a separate "Print" button will be incorporated into the information page <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes and only a reminder will be given <input type="checkbox"/> No	
11. 1	Withdrawal Rights	Participants have the right to withdraw from the study up to 1 week following the online interview. Past this point, data will be anonymized.	
11.2	Describe the process by which participants may withdraw.	If someone withdraws, the information and the data of this participant will be immediately deleted. Participants will be permitted to keep the compensation.	
11.3	Will a participant be withdrawn by simply closing a browser window?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> NO, the participant must click on a "Withdraw" (or "Exit Survey" button.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
11.4	Will participants have "Save" and "Resume" options	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
12. 1	Will participants be compensated?	<input type="checkbox"/> They will have an <i>opportunity to be entered</i> into a draw. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In kind/Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology Participant Pool Bonus Points <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
12.2	Will participant data and compensation data be linked?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES The emails will be deleted upon the researcher receiving the edit transcripts from the participants. <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
12.3	If No, describe the process (e.g., separate landing page) by which participant data and compensation data will be kept separate.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
13. 1	Will participants be provided post-study information (e.g., community resource list)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

13.2	If YES, describe the process (e.g., separate landing page) by which participants will gain access to this information and whether participants who withdraw will still have access to this resource information.		<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
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## VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Fang Lin

PLACE OF BIRTH: Wuhan, Hubei, China

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1990

EDUCATION: City College of Wuhan Science and Technology

University, B.A., Wuhan, China, 2009

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