

ELUCIDATING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEMES EMPLOYED IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Xiaoxia Wei^{1,*} and Yan Ye²

Abstract

As mainstream literature in the business communication field has yielded a strong preference toward the specific skills required in the business field, this study aimed to elucidate students' perceptions of the six main enduring themes, namely, rhetoric, technology, culture, dissemination, motivation, and impression, in current business communication instruction. A questionnaire survey was employed to determine the perceptions of 144 students toward topics they had already studied in a business communication course conducted in an international college in Thailand. Students' perceptions were also compared with the five widely-used business communication textbooks, as well as the course syllabus being used in the above-mentioned business communication course. The analysis indicated *technology* as the most controversial theme with regard to the course, the five textbooks, and the students. The findings in this study have both theoretical and practical implications. The study considered the application of theme-based instruction into a business discipline by adopting a top-down approach to research students' learning from "big ideas", i.e. themes, rather than a superficial knowledge of a broader range of ideas, information or specific skills.

Keywords: Theme-based Instruction, Business Communication, Students' Perception

^{1,*}Dr. Xiaoxia Wei obtains a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Assumption University, Thailand. Currently she is working as a lecturer in the Business Administration Department of Mahidol University International College, Thailand. She is interested in research areas of business communication, cross-cultural communication, as well as research in both Chinese and English language teaching. Email: xiaoxia.wei@mahidol.edu

²Asst. Prof. Dr. Yan Ye obtains a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Assumption University, Thailand. Currently she is working as a full-time lecturer and research director in Graduate School of Human Sciences of Assumption University, Thailand. Her research interests are in educational administration, leadership, school management, Chinese and English language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Theme-based instruction (TBI) originates from general primary education and has been practiced since 1960 in the UK (Cameron, 2001). It was then integrated into language teaching, described as a model in which “the language syllabus has been arranged around a core thematic syllabus” (Housen & Pierrard, 2005, p. 435), and “the teacher selects a theme from which language outcomes are to be realized” (Met, 1999: 8). Theme-based instruction has also been widely used in language courses at university level to contribute to students’ academic achievement in higher education (Snow, 2001)

The rationale for this thematic approach is to “avoid fragmentation and unconnected skill exercises” by integrating a variety of activities around meaningful contents to satisfy students’ authentic needs and interests (Berry & Mindes, 1993). With the theme providing a meaningful context for understanding, learners can have a fast acquisition of new vocabulary, and use the language for the natural use of a wide range of discourse types, both written and spoken (Cameron, 2001).

Following the success of teaching and learning experiences of TBI application in language classrooms, this research was designed to examine the importance of the themes included in a Business Communication course, conducted at an international college in Thailand. The students’ perspective was the

focus of the study, as the current syllabus used in the course is based upon widely-used textbooks in business communication, rather than students’ practical needs and interests. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed:

- 1) What are students’ perceptions towards the themes included in their business communication course in the international college in Thailand?
- 2) What are the different foci regarding business communication themes in students’ perceptions, and those being used in the business communication course syllabus in the international college in Thailand, or the current field of business communication?

It is hoped that this theme-based study could contribute a new perspective to the mainstream literature in the business communication field as most current studies yield a strong preference toward specific skills required in the business field (McPherson, 1998; Wardrop, 2002; Robles, 2012). Moreover, it is believed that focusing on “themes” not only enables teachers to link different disciplines meaningfully, but also provides students with more opportunities to develop deeper knowledge of a few “big ideas” rather than a superficial knowledge of a broader range of ideas and information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theme-based Instruction in General

TBI has been defined as an approach with a broader model of content-based instruction, in which the emphasis is on exposing students to a “highly contextualized” second language environment by structuring the whole course around certain themes or topics (Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Brinton, 2003). Apart from integrating curriculum areas around a topic, theme-based units also link curriculum strands and can capitalize on learners’ interests, therefore creating a sense of purpose and community in the classroom (Mumford, 2000). Handal and Bobis (2004) argued that TBI focuses on the “application” of a subject connected to an overarching theme, which is different from topic-based teaching where the emphasis is on the subject “content.”

There are many advantages of adopting a theme-based syllabus in teaching and learning. It allows the teacher to select a theme in accordance with students’ interests, needs, and aims, but also provides a natural setting that focuses on the learners’ real needs, interests, and real-life experience. Learners, therefore, can achieve better comprehension and intrinsic motivation by participating in such a course (Snow & Brinton, 1988; Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989; Met, 1991). Cummins (1980) provided

further significant theoretical support for TBI by arguing in support of its function in enhancing students’ basic interpersonal communication skills. This refers to a social dimension demonstrating a student’s ability to converse socially with teachers, peers, and others, and is supported by TBI, as a course organized around themes can create a more natural communicative environment.

Themes in Business Communication

Literature regarding textbook theme analysis is not new (Aronoff, 1975; Villere & Stearns, 1976). Business communication, as a hybrid discipline, consists of broader theoretical traditions in rhetorical theory, communication theory, and management theory. According to Bell and Muir (2014), there are six main themes with enduring relevance to business communication today, namely, rhetoric, technology, culture, dissemination, motivation, and impression. The specific topics under each theme were also discussed by referring to five widely-used business communication textbooks:

- a. *Business Communication: Process and Product*, 8/e, (2014), by Mary Ellen Guffey & Dana Loewy
- b. *Business Communication: Building Critical Skills*, 5/e, (2011), by Kitty Locker
- c. *Business Communication*, 16/e, (2010), by Carol M. Lehman and Debbie D. DuFrene

d. *Lesikar's Business Communication, 12/e, (2010)*, by Kathryn Rentz, Marie Flatley, Paula Lentz.

e. *Business Communication Today, 11/e, (2011)*, by Courtland Bovee and John V. Thill

Rhetoric

According to Bitzer (1968), a rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation, in the same sense that an answer is a response to a question, or a solution to a problem. Hence, a rhetorical situation is a situation that determines and brings about a rhetoric, and the rhetoric creates situations by making issues salient. Devitt (1989) also explained the close relationship between rhetorical situations and discourse types: “[A] rhetorical situation calls for an appropriate response in discourse. As speakers and writers respond to the situation, they use certain discourse characteristics: a particular type of organization, a certain amount and type of detail, a level of formality, a syntactic style, and so on.” According to Haase (2012), oral and written communication skills will always be a part of business communication, following the rhetorical principle (as cited in Bell & Muir, 2014). Topics under rhetorical themes used in textbooks consist of planning, composing, and completing messages; skills related to oral and written communication; and word choice, construction of sentences and paragraphs, persuasive messages, and writing for positive effect.

Technology

The development of business communication has always been driven by technology, especially, with the use of social media and other channels in which messages can be both created and delivered. Topics falling into this theme include work-related messages; reporting basics including types, length, and formality; and technology-based skills, such as PowerPoint designs, data and graphic presentations.

Culture

Globalization has increased the need for people to be involved in international activities and intercultural communication. Consequently, globalization has become a common issue. Even though many scholars and researchers have produced work on various aspects of intercultural communication, business communication in classroom practice has not always been strong in highlighting the diversity of culture, as it tends to be dominated by *standard* American business communication models (of writing and delivery), as argued by Bell and Muir (2014). There are only one or two chapters discussing communication across cultures in each of the five textbooks used for analysis in this study.

Dissemination

This theme mainly refers to the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering messages. It is regarded as the foundation of communication studies in general, and contributes to the physical and logical flow of

information (Shannon & Weaver, 1949, cited in Bell & Muir, 2014). Listening, meeting, oral presentation, and team and interpersonal skills are included in this theme.

Motivation

Motivation addresses the motivation of the sender and the needs of the audience. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) can be used to analyze people's needs in general and determine ways to appeal to such needs. Unfortunately, there is no chapter in the five examined business communication textbooks that covers this theme.

Impression

This includes how the sender is seen and wants to be seen by the audience. According to Bell and Muir (2014), this theme is important to employment, career and client communication in terms of making first impressions, and therefore, it becomes the second most covered content (23.7%) besides technology (24.7%) in the five business communication textbooks, compared with rhetoric (20.6%), dissemination (12.4%), culture (6.2%), and motivation (0). Topics related to impression include delivering positive or negative messages; job-related skills, such as writing a resume or a cover letter, conduct in an interview, and follow-up messages; a "you" attitude; and positive emphasis.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

All participants of the study were students majoring in business administration, who had passed the English IV course (the highest level of general education course regarding English proficiency) before taking the business communication course, which is among the core courses of the business administration program at the international college in Thailand where the study was conducted.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants. Purposive sampling is also known as nonprobability sampling, purposeful sampling, or "qualitative sampling." According to Tashakkori and Teddlie, it involves selecting certain units or cases "based on a specific purpose rather than randomly" (as cited in Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Therefore, all 144 students who took the business communication course participated in the study.

Ethical Considerations

The following measures were taken to avoid ethical issues during data-collection:

1. Data was collected at the end of the trimester; therefore, students had finished all content included in the course and grades had been given;
2. The teacher gave clear instructions and explanations before distributing the questionnaires;

3. The teacher informed the students that their participation was voluntary;
4. The students' answers were anonymous;
5. The students were given enough time to respond to the questions;
6. The teacher was absent when students were giving answers.

Teaching Background of the Business Communication Course

The Business Communication Course in the focal business program consists of a 12 week block of study, in which students meet twice a week, with each class session lasting two hours. In total, there are 48 teaching hours for this course. The detailed time allocation for each theme is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Summary of Topics Taught Under Each Theme in the Business Communication Course Syllabus

Rhetoric	Introduction to BC	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	7Cs and word choices	3 class x 2 hours=6 hours
	Contraction of clear sentences and paragraphs	
	Writing process: planning/writing/proofreading	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Persuasive messages	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Writing for positive effect	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Total	14 hours (29.2%)
Technology	Basic report writing	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Types of report: proposal, business plans, formal business reports	
	Graphics and graphs design in report	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Email writing	
	Memo and letter, and writing via social media	
Total	6 hours (12.5%)	
Culture	Cross-cultural communication	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Non-verbal skills	
	Total	2 hours (4.2%)

Table 1 (continued)

	Listening skills	1 class x 2 hours=2
	Team skills	hours
	Interpersonal skills	
Dissemination	Meeting skills	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Oral presentation skills	2 class x 2 hours=4 hours
	Total	8 hours (16.7%)
Motivation	Audience analysis	1 class x 2 hours=2
	Reader benefits	hours
	Total	2 hours (4.2%)
Impression	Positive, neutral, and negative messages	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Resume	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Cover letter	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Interview	1 class x 2 hours=2
	Follow-up messages	hours
	“You” attitude	1 class x 2 hours=2 hours
	Research skills: finding, analyzing, documenting information, questionnaire, interview, composing reports, etc.	3 classes x 2 hours=6 hours
	Total	16 hours (33.3%)
Total	48 Teaching Hours (100%)	

Instruments

A survey questionnaire was employed to determine the perception of the 144 students toward the topics included in the business communication course. The students were asked to give their perception of the importance of a given

communication topic that they had already studied. Perceptions were identified as: 1 = not at all important, 2 = unimportant, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = important and 5 = very important.

RESULTS

Objective 1 Students' Perceptions

As shown in Figure 1, all themes covered in the business communication course, with the exception of technology were perceived as important to varying degrees. Dissemination was clearly the most important theme compared with others, with a mean value of 4.25. The second most important theme was impression (4.18), followed by culture (4.12), rhetoric (4.05), and motivation (4.00).

Figure 2 shows detailed information on the degree of importance of each topic under each theme included in the business communication course. Under the theme of Technology, which was

deemed “somewhat important” overall, various types of writing, namely Graphics and Graph Design in Reports (3.44), Memos (3.49), Letters (3.68), and Writing via Social Media (3.73), were not perceived as important topics, while Email Writing (4.37) achieved the second highest mean value overall. The highest score of 4.58 belonged to the topic of “Research Skills” under the theme Impression. Other topics which the participants did not find to be important were Introduction to Business Communication (3.75), Bad News Messages (3.80), and Good and Neutral Messages (3.87), under the theme Impression; Reader Benefits (3.92), under the theme Motivation; and Non-verbal Communication Skills (3.94) under the theme Culture.

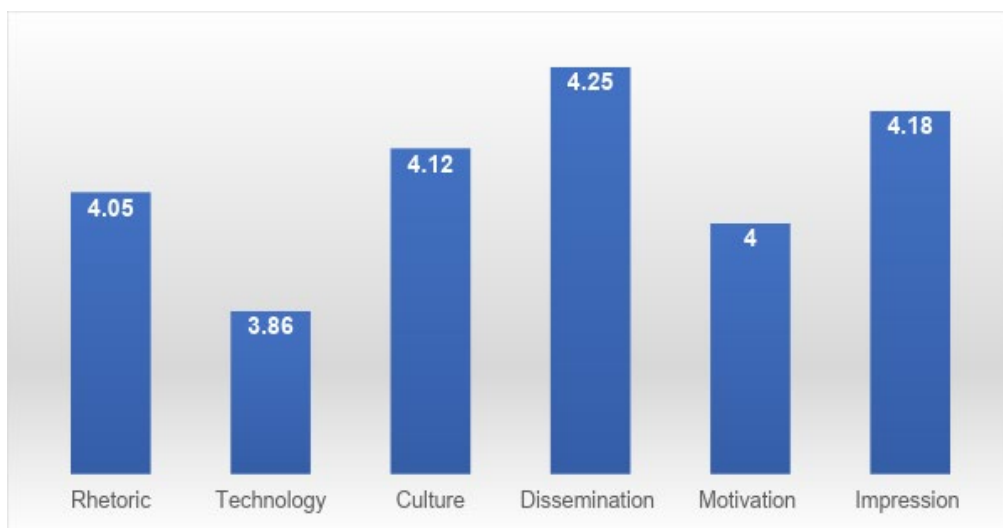


Figure 1. Mean of importance of themes included in the Business Communication Course

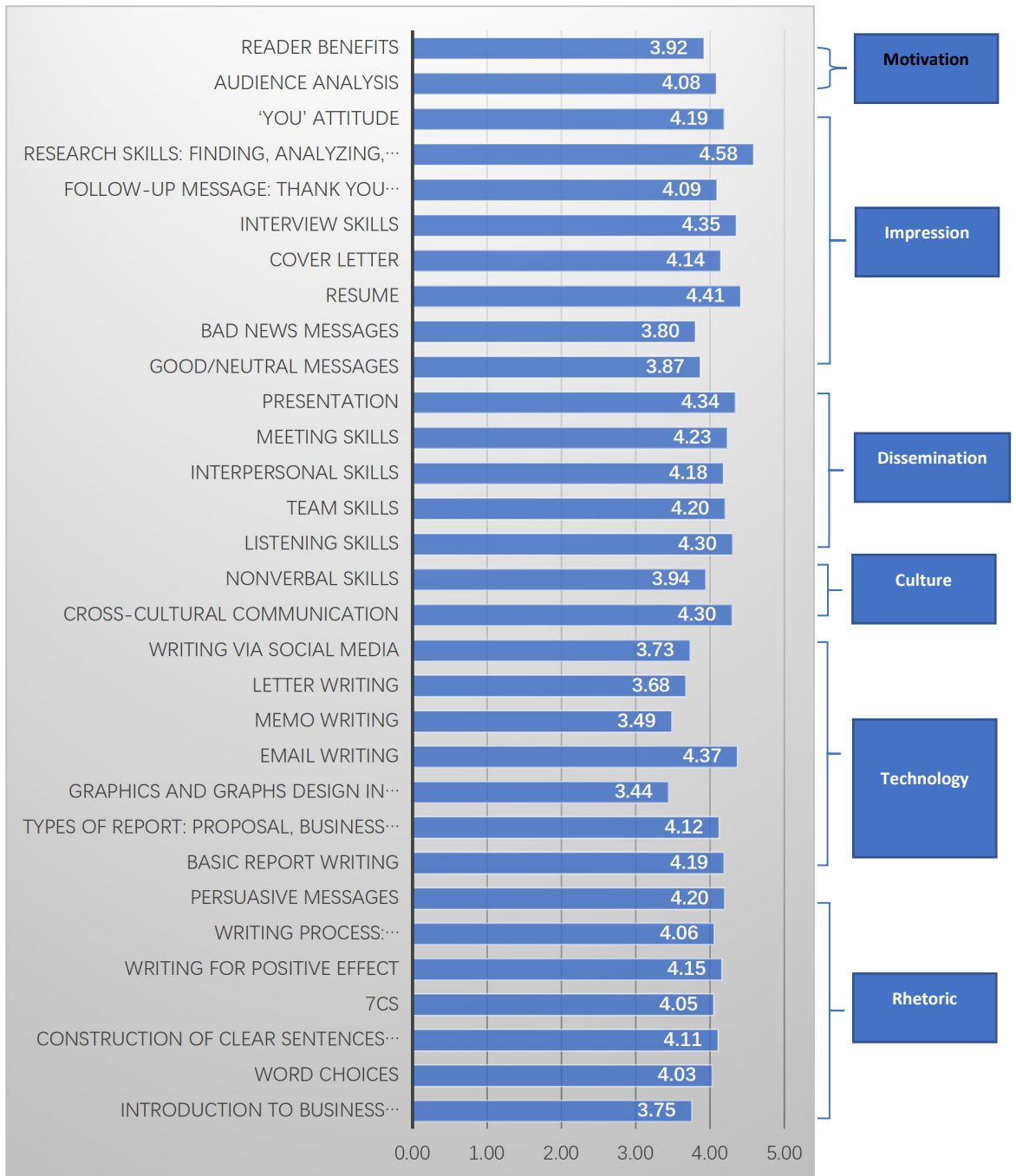


Figure 2. Mean of importance of topics included in the Business Communication Course

Objective 2 Different Theme Foci among Students' Perceptions, Course Syllabus, and Textbooks

Table 2 Comparison of Importance of Themes

Level of Importance	6	5	4	3	2	1
Five Books	Technology (24.70%)	Impression (23.70%)	Rhetoric (20.60%)	Dissemination (12.40%)	Culture (6.20%)	Motivation (0%)
Business Communication Course (BC Course)	Impression (33.30%)	Rhetoric (29.20%)	Dissemination (16.70%)	Technology (12.50%)	Culture (4.20%)	Motivation (4.20%)
Students' Perception	Dissemination (4.25)	Impression (4.18)	Culture (4.12)	Rhetoric (4.05)	Motivation (4.00)	Technology (3.86)

Technology

Table 2 compares the importance of each theme from different perspectives. With reference to the theme of Technology, it can be seen that this theme is the most important among the five most popular business communication books, as it accounts for almost a quarter of the contents of each book. In the BC Course, its importance declines to the fourth important theme, making up 12.5% of the course content. However, regarding student perception, this theme was perceived to be the least important among the participating students, especially in terms of graphics and graph designs, and the various writing styles, such as memo writing, letter writing, and writing via social media (see Figure 2).

Dissemination

Regarding the theme of dissemination, which consists of both soft skills (e.g., team and interpersonal skills) and employability skills (e.g., meeting, listening, and presentation skills), the participants expected to gain more information from this theme, as it was deemed the most important. Both the BC Course and the textbooks failed to pay adequate attention to this theme as it only accounts for 16.7% and 12.4% of the content respectively.

Impression

There was little difference regarding Impression as it was very important to all three parties, being either the most important or the second most important theme.

Culture

Participants perceived culture as the third most important topic, and therefore more important than it appears in textbooks (6.2%) or the course syllabus (4.2%).

Motivation

All three parties failed to perceive the importance of this theme, indicating it as either the least important or the second least important theme, as shown in Table 2.

Rhetoric

It seems that all three parties (the Books, BC Course, and students) achieved a relatively similar consensus regarding Rhetoric, deeming it a moderately important topic (see Table 2).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has identified various differences by comparing students' perceptions with their theme-based business communication course syllabus at an international college in Thailand, and five well-known textbooks, with regard to six themes used in the business communication discipline.

From the students' perspective, the theme Technology was found to be the least important, especially in terms of graphics and graph design, and various writing styles, such as memo writing, letter writing, and writing via social media. However,

this result is not surprising. As argued by Prensky (2001), today's students have changed radically, and they are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach. The younger generations are "digital natives" who speak the digital language of computers, video games, and the internet. They are so familiar with all kinds of new technical skills by nature, and therefore do not need to be taught by teachers who are mainly "digital immigrants." Email writing is the second most important topic perceived by the students, as it is the most commonly used form of written communication in the corporate workplace, as argued by DeKay (2010). Accordingly, future books regarding business communication could reduce the proportion of the book devoted to the theme of Technology but ensure that topics related to email writing are maintained due to the significance and the practical role of emails in the workplace.

The theme Dissemination consists of soft skills (e.g., team and interpersonal skills) and employability skills (e.g., meeting, listening, and presentation skills). Compared with technical skills, soft and employability skills have gradually emerged as more important and the most wanted skills for which employers are looking for, from potential employees (Randy & Claire, 2007; Robles, 2012; Clokie & Fourie, 2016). Students expect to gain more information from the theme Dissemination, but both the BC

Course and the textbooks do not pay adequate attention to this theme.

There is little difference in the importance of Impression from the different perspectives. It is assumed that all topics under this theme play practical roles in the workplace. Interestingly, students have the highest degree of interest in research skills that are more complex and involve higher-order thinking. Both professional book writers and teachers could devote more time to helping students develop these skills based on the corresponding high needs of students.

Even though students indicated little interest in non-verbal communication, they perceived cross-cultural communication as an important topic. In the last century Munter (1993) pointed out the importance of cross-cultural communication for managers who wish to succeed in today's global environment. Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud (2006) also argued that the lack of cross-cultural competence on the part of business practitioners is among the major reasons for many international business failures. The successful managers of the 21st century will be the culturally-competent ones (Lewis, 2006). Therefore, business communication courses should focus more on cross-cultural competence.

Students also perceived the audience analysis under Motivation as important. This involves identifying the audience and adapting a speech to their interests, level of understanding, attitudes, and beliefs. Taking an

audience-centered approach is important as a communicator's effectiveness will be improved if the presentation of information is created and delivered in an appropriate manner, based upon the needs of the targeted audience. Therefore, it is suggested that textbooks should include more discussions related to motivation.

Last but not least, it seems that all three parties (the Books, BC Course, and students) have achieved a consensus regarding the importance of the theme Rhetoric. As defined by Joseph and McGlenn (2002), "Logic is the art of thinking; grammar, the art of inventing symbols and combining them to express thought; and rhetoric, the art of communicating thought from one mind to another, the adaptation of language to circumstance." An effective and efficient communication only takes place when a communicator possesses logical contents, accurate grammar, and the capabilities to adapt according to different contexts.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study have important theoretical implications. Firstly, it has adopted a top-down approach to researching students' learning from "big ideas", i.e. themes, rather than a superficial knowledge of a broader range of ideas, information or specific skills. It is hoped that this could offer a brand-new perspective to research the business communication field. Secondly, this study highlights the importance of listening

to the student voice as an active respondent in creating a learner-centered learning environment (Fielding, 2012). It is different, however, from previous research on student voice, in which student voice served as a catalyst for change in terms of improving teaching, curricula and teacher-student relationships, leading to changes in student assessment and teacher training (Feiding, 2001; Lodge, 2005; Mitra, 2003, cited in Wei, 2018). This study aimed to find out the mismatches among the business communication textbooks, educational practitioners, and students, by assessing student perceptions.

Practical implications

This study has also brought practical contributions to the current literature in both the TBI and business communication fields.

Firstly, students in this study are independent and mature learners who are assumed to have possessed certain critical thinking skills; therefore, their perceptions could be used as references by professionals in the field when composing books or teaching the business communication subject. Moreover, it is hoped that the teachers should determine students' needs and wants and make corresponding adjustments in their teaching practice, rather than relying too much on the textbooks.

Secondly, this study is different from the current empirical studies regarding TBI in terms of participants

and context. The application of TBI mainly took place either in pure language classrooms (Kasper, 1997; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003; Rodgers, 2006) or by targeting younger learners (Alptekin, Erçetin, & Bayyurt, 2007; Fathimah, 2014; Tussa'diah & Nurfadillah, 2018). This study, however, applied TBI in a business discipline with adults. In the meantime, adopting TBI in the business field is also a new direction for other researchers to refer to.

Limitations and future research

Despite its contribution, the research is not without limitations. The textbooks on business communication being researched in this study have since produced more updated versions. It is suggested that educators who are interested in this line of research could analyze the themes included in the new versions to find out any similarities or differences. Furthermore, it is hoped that more and more future research could focus on studying the themes included in business communication at a broader and more strategic level. The current literature in business communication discussing themes is rather limited; this study, therefore, has mainly referred to the research results of Bell and Muir (2014)'s research results.

REFERENCES

Alptekin, C., Erçetin, G., & Bayyurt, Y. (2007). The effectiveness of a

- theme-based syllabus for young L2 learners. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28 (1): 1-17.
- Aronoff, C. (1975). The rise of the behavioral perspective in selected general management textbooks: An empirical investigation through content analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 18 (000004), 753-768. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/255377>
- Bell, R. L., & Muir, C. (2014). A review of business communication under the leadership function. *Business Studies Journal*, 6 (2), 99-121.
- Berry, C.F., & Mindes, G. (1993). *Planning a theme-based curriculum: goals, themes, activities, and planning guides for 4s and 5s*. Glenview, IL: Good Year Books.
- Bitzer, L. (1968). The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1, 1-14.
- Bovee, C. L. & Thill, J.V. (2011). *Business Communication Today* (11th ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Brinton, D. M. (2003). Content-Based Instruction. In Nunan, D. (Ed.), *Practical English Language Teaching*. McGraw-Hill Contemporary
- Brinton, D. M., Snow, M. A., & Wesche, M. B. (1989). *Content-based second language instruction*. Boston Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Brinton, D.M., Snow, M.A., & Wesche, M. (2003). *Content-based second language instruction*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Brown, H.D.(2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). San Fransisco, California: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clokie, T. L., & Fourie, E. (2016). Graduate employability and communication competence. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 79(4), 442-463. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2329490616657635>
- Cummins, J. (1980). The cross-lingual dimensions of language proficiency: Implications for bilingual education and the optimal age issue. *TESOL Quarterly*. 14, 175-187.
- DeKay, S. H. (2010). Designing email messages for corporate readers: A case study of effective and ineffective rhetorical strategies at a Fortune 100 Company. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 73(1), 109-119. <http://dx.doi.org//10.1177/1080569909358103>
- Devitt, A. J. (1989). *Standardizing written English: Diffusion in the case of Scotland 1520 -1659*.

- Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Fathimah, N. M. (2014). Theme-based teaching in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. *Journal of English and Education*, 2 (2), 49-55.
- Fielding, M. (2012) 'Student voice: patterns of partnership and the demands of deep democracy', Lecture given at the College of Teacher's Annual Awards Ceremony on 16 May, 2012. <http://www.collegeofteachers.ac.uk/content/student-voice-patterns-partnership-and-demands-deep-democracy> (Accessed May 20, 2017)
- Guffey, M. E. (2014). *Business communication: process & product* (8th ed.). South-Western College Publisher.
- Haase, F. (2012). Creating 'business rhetoric'. terminological exchange of rhetoric and 'business communication' in contemporary business. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(5), 506 - 520.
- Handal, B., & Bobis, J. (2004). Teaching mathematics thematically: teachers' perspectives. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, 16 (1), 3 - 18.
- Housen, A., & Pierrard, M. (2005). Investigating instructed second language acquisition. In A. Housen & M. Pierrard (Eds.), *Investigations in instructed second language acquisition* (pp. 1-27). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kasper, L. F. (1997). The impact of content-based instructional programs on the academic progress of ESL learners. *English for Specific Purposes*, 164 (3), 309-320.
- Lehman, C. M. & Dufrene, D. D. (2010). *Business Communication* (16th ed.). Singapore: Cengage Learning Asia
- Lewis, R. D. (2006). *When cultures collide: Leading across cultures* (3rd ed.). Hardback: Nicholas Brealey.
- Locker, K. O. (2011). *Business communication: building critical skills* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Johnson, J. P., Lenartowicz, T., & Apud, S. (2006). Cross-cultural competence in international business: toward a definition and a model. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(4), 525–543. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400205>
- Joseph, M., & McGlenn, M. (2002). *The liberal arts of logic, grammar and rhetoric*. Pennsylvania: Paul Dry Books, Inc.
- Masako, D.O. (1996). A theme-based approach: Curriculum design for teaching an advanced course of Japanese as a foreign language. 6 (5), 125- 139.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human

- motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.
- McPherson, B. (1998). Student perceptions about business communication in their careers. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 61(2), 68–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/108056999806100209>
- Met, M. (1991). Learning language through content: learning content through language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24 (4), 281-295.
- Met, M. (1999). *Content-Based Instruction: Defining Terms, Making Decisions*. 1999, January. NFLC Reports. Washington DC: The National Foreign Language Center.
- Mumford, D. (2000). *Planning a theme based units*. Canada: Pacific Edge Publishing Ltd.
- Munter, M. (1993). Cross-cultural communication for managers. *Business Horizons*, 36(3), 69–78. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813\(05\)80152-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813(05)80152-1)
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>
- Randy, B., & Claire, Z. (2007). Soft skills: The new curriculum for hard-core technical professionals. *Techniques: Connecting Education and Careers (J1)*, 82(5), 20–22.
- Rentz, K., Flatley, M. & Lentz, P. (2010). *Lesikar's Business Communication (12th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 75(4), 453–465.
- Rodgers, D. (2006). Developing content and form: encouraging evidence from Italian content-based instruction. *Modern Language Journal*, 90, 373-386.
- Snow, M. (2001). Content Based and Immersion Models for Second and Foreign Language Teaching. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Third Edition. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Thompson Learning.
- Snow, M., & Brinton, D. (1988). Content based language instruction: Investigating the effectiveness of the adjunct model. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22(4).
- Teddle, C., & Yu, F., (2007). Mixed methods sampling: a typology with examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1 (1), 77 – 100.
- Tussa'diah, H. & Nurfadillah, K. (2018). The implementation of theme based teaching to improve students' achievement in narrative text. *KnE Social Sciences: the 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature (AICLL)*: 352-360. DOI: 10.18502/kss.v3i4.1946
- Schnalke, M., & Mason, R. B. (2014). The influence of culture on

- marketing communications: Critical cultural factors influencing South African and German businesses. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 12(1), 172–180.
- Villere, M. F., & Stearns, G. K. (1976). The readability of organizational behavior textbooks. *Academy of Management Journal*, 19(1), 132–137.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/255455>
- Wardrop, W. J. (2002). Department chair's perceptions of the importance of business communication skills. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 65(4), 60.
- Wei, X. X. (2018). Using student voice in creating learner-centered course design. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 24 (1), 22-40.
- Wesche, M. B., & Skehan, P. (2002). *Communicative, task-based, and content-based language instruction*. In R.B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 207–228). New York, N.Y: Oxford University Press.