

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this research paper, the author set a survey for finding the main factors which become barriers and affect Chinese Non-English major students' writing ability. The survey questions are:

What factors become barriers to affect Chinese Non-English major students' writing?

How do these factors relate to students' writing performance?

3.1 SUBJECTS

The subjects of this survey were second year undergraduate students majoring in computer at Yangzhou University. College English is a compulsory course, for all undergraduate students in China; it includes comprehensive training in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills. All the subjects were finishing College English Band II when they participated in the survey. In the survey, the subjects were assumed to have received certain English language writing training and have practiced writing within and after the College English class.

3.2 MATERIALS

1. Questionnaire

The survey instrument employed in this study was the Mandarin Chinese version of Writer's Block Questionnaire, which was translated from the English version designed by Rose (1984). The reliability of the translated questionnaire is satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha = .843).

2. Writing performance

For this study, the author randomly chose one essay writing task from the test papers of College English Test Band VI. The title was “Film Is Giving Way to TV” and asked the subjects to finish the writing task in one class hour (45 minutes).

Two Chinese teachers who were from the university and teach English did the grading of the essays, as both of them were qualified and experienced raters for College English Test Band IV/VI. The two raters respectively graded each of the essays under the writing scoring system of College English Test Band VI, with 15 points as the full mark. When both raters finished grading the essays, Pearson correlation of the scores given by both raters was calculated with $p = .608$ ($\text{sig.} < .001$), which meant the scores given by the two raters were significantly correlated and the inter-raters reliability was satisfactory. Lastly, the mean score of the two scores for each essay was taken as the writing performance of each subject.

3.3 PROCEDURES

The questionnaire was administered during the College English class hours and the class. All together 80 questionnaires were received and the data of 75 questionnaires out of them were valid and analyzed in this survey. Questionnaires with missing values were dropped.

As for the statistical analysis, the author adopted the following approaches for anglicizing: 1) For the factor extracting model, we used maximum likelihood for its powerful function in analyzing variables data, 2) For the rotation methods, we adopted promax out of the oblique rotations, 3) We suppressed the absolute values less than .40, because the variable loadings must be more than .40 to prove the significance in construct validity, and deleted the variables whose cross-loadings were more than .40 (Nunnally, 1978). The statistical software the author used for exploratory factor analysis was SPSS 12.0

After exploratory factor analysis, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis to examine the goodness-of-fit of the model the author gained from exploratory factor analysis. Modification of the model was also employed to better the model. The statistical software we used for confirmatory factor analysis was AMOS4.0.

Lastly, a Pearson correlation analysis was done to see the relationship between the factors of writing barriers and their writing performance.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The results of confirmatory factor analysis on the modified model are presented in Table 1.

After the modification, the values of X^2 and X^2/df were lowered with X^2/df value less than 2 and the values of IFI, TLI and CFI were good enough, though the value of RMSEA was not that satisfactory. That is to say, the data within the modified model fits well and the model can be accepted.

Table1. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Modified Model

x^2	x^2/df	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
295.517	1.642	0.907	0.889	0.905	0.062

Table2. Factor of Writer's Block of Chinese EFL Learners

	Variables	Loadin g
Factor I Complexity	To write essays on books and articles that are very complex is difficult for me.	.825
	I have trouble deciding how to write on issues that have many interpretations	.795
	I'm not sure at times of how to organize all the information I have collected for a paper.	.789
	I have trouble with assignments that ask me to compare or contrast or to analyze.	.588
	Writing on topics that can have different focuses is difficult for me.	.563
	At times, I find it hard to write what I mean.	.521
	I think my writing is good.	-.475
	My teachers are familiar with so much good writing that my writing must look bad by comparison.	.442
Factor II Blocking	At times, I sit for hours unable to write a thing.	.856
	I have to hand in assignments late because I can't get the words on paper.	.637
	Starting a paper is very hard for me.	.530
	Estimate how often you experience writer's block.	.528
	I run over deadlines because I get stuck while trying to write my paper.	.510
	At times, my first paragraph takes me over two hours to write.	.472
Factor III Premature editing	My first paragraph has to be perfect before I'll go on.	.744
	When I write, I'll wait until I've found just the right phrase.	.461
	Each sentence I write has to be just right before I'll go on to the next.	.422
	I find myself writing a sentence, then erasing it and trying another sentence, then scratching it out. I might do this for sometime.	.412
Factor IV Attitudes	I like having the opportunity to express my ideas in writing.	.771
	I enjoy writing, though writing is difficult at times.	.673
	Writing is a very unpleasant experience for me.	-.556