English for General Purposes (EGP) at a Taiwanese University: A Mix-Methodological Analysis of Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

English has been one of the most important second/foreign language (L2) for college freshmen in Taiwan. Its status was magnified under the Teaching Excellence Project (TEP) scheme in 2005. Being affiliated with other courses of general education, English has now been termed "English for General Purposes" (EGP)" and has become the only compulsory foreign-language subject on the campuses of many universities. Previous studies have suggested that teachers and students displayed blending attitudes towards EGP and belief in it. While some supported the EGP-relevant policies, others disagreed on the focus of the courses. Despite the continuous discussions, students' opinions on EGP and suggestions for better implementation have remained scarce, with qualitative analyses in particular. Using a mix-methodological approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews in this study, we found the impact of gender, grade level, and English proficiency on learners' perspectives regarding EGP. We also observed both the consistency and discrepancy regarding EGP between the computed statistics and elaborated narrations from the students who participated. Students' suggestions indicated that for better EGP curriculum design, courses for advanced English learning and communication-proficiency development should be offered, while the right to textbook selection and opportunities for language exchanges should be realized.

Keywords: English for General Purposes (EGP), Freshman English (FE), second/foreign language (L2)

1. Introduction

English is a lingua franca. It has been the native language of the majority and granted the status of a priority foreign language (Crystal, 1997). It has also been the common-chosen language for communication among speakers from different lingual-cultural backgrounds and the dominant language in diverse fields, thus the most-studied, read, written and even spoken second/foreign language (L2) in the classrooms worldwide (Jenkins, 2009). In certain places, English proficiency has been a symbol of personal achievement, which possibly related to career, social and economic advancement (Nunn, 2003). According to Crystal (1997), in the entertaining industry, at least 85% of the films were produced in English. For academia, 90% of the journal articles were written using English. Statistically, non-native speakers of English out-numbered native speakers. English may not be the most-used L1.[1] It definitely is the most-studied language and the most prominent L2 because of the continuously-increasing acceptance and requirement in diverse fields of profession.

The need resulted from international marketization and modernization and the attempt to upgrade the international competitiveness via participating in various international organizations, like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asia-Pacific Regional Operations Center (APROC), have led to the greater demand for English-efficient manpower in Taiwan. This initiated the craze for English learning. Before 1993, English was the only compulsory language subject, called *Freshman English (FE)* or *Freshman English for Non-English Majors (FENM)*, for first-year non-English majors at the tertiary level. In 1993, the Ministry of Education (MOE) regulated that the eight-credit FE should be replaced by six-credit foreign language courses, which allowed students the freedom to choose any foreign languages provided by the schools to fulfill the language requirement (Huang, 1998; Shih,

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[1] According to Saville-Troike (2006), the most-used L1 was Chinese (p. 9).

2010). Insisting in the importance of English, several universities came up with the so-called "complying strategy", granting only the students with a certain degree of English proficiency to take a foreign language other than English. Many universities retained English as the only foreign language for freshmen because of insufficient qualified teachers of other foreign languages (Huang, 1997). In other words, English remained its dominance at the tertiary level. The status was more manifest under the scheme of the Teaching Excellence Project (TEP) initiating in 2005. At many universities, FE, affiliated with courses of art, humanities, physical education and fundamental science, formed the foundation of general education. The term "FE" was then designated as *English for General Purposes (EGP)*, bearing the mission to "cultivate students' interest and habits in learning English… enhance their general language competence for a more accurate and fluent production and reception of English in dealing with everyday situations" (Y. J. Chang, Liu, Sun, & Yang, 2011, p. 271). EGP has been the compulsory foreign-language subject again ever since. It has been important as it is deemed to prepare the students for their later studies of other major-related courses. Students were required to take EGP of four to six credits during their freshman or sophomore years. Based on the English test scores on College Entrance Exam (CEE) or College Entrance Examination in Specified Subjects (CEESS), all freshmen were divided into advanced, intermediate and elementary levels for EGP. Reading, writing and listening were the skills emphasized for class instruction. To compensate for the shortage of speaking training, a variety of extra-curriculum activities, such as peer conversation, [2] English corner, [3] English camp and English drama and speech contests, were held regularly on campus.

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[2] Small-group extracurricular English speaking and communication activities led by teaching assistants who are usuallyAmerican-born Chinese or students with advanced English proficiency.

[3] Non-regular English conversation classes taught by English-native speakers using movies or other audio-video resources as materials to provide the experiences of total-immersed learning, resulting in natural acquisition of listening and speaking.

Oftentimes, EGP teachers have been allowed to choose their own teaching materials, classroom activities, and testing methods (Huang, 1996). Despite the freedom, students and teachers have had different opinions on EGP. Owing to pervious negative learning experiences at high schools which emphasized grammar instruction and paper-format tests, many freshmen lost their interest in learning English at universities. They upheld the ideal of class-time reduction for EGP. However, graduates valued EGP studying more because of their realization of the importance of English skills in the workplace (Huang, 1997).

Generally, students' listening ability was weaker than their reading one (Behzadi & Lashkarian, 2015; H. C. Chang & Feng, 2010). Interestingly, it was the skill needed the most improvement by students (Chia, Chia, Johnson & Olive, 1999). A gap was noticed between school curriculum design and students' expectation. Many of the foci for EGP was on reading, even though students asserted that listening and reading were two equal-crucial skills (Huang, 1998). They insisted that the attention should be on understanding and speaking English (Y. L. Yang, 1985). The teacher-student participants in Tsou's (2004) study even considered that the ability to understand English was their imperative goal for teaching. The observations from plenty of earlier studies also confirmed that many college students thought that they lacked sufficient conversation skills to interact with foreigners, thus needing most the development of communication proficiency (Y. J. Chang et al., 2011; Chien & Hsu, 2011; Y. L. Yang, 1985) and the confidence in conversing in English (Tasi, 1997).

The studies regarding EGP have also noted that English-proficiency placement policy influenced students' attitude toward English studying and their learning behavior. Students of advanced and intermediate levels believed that the ability to read authentic textbooks of their fields was important; while students of elementary-level accentuated the need to understand lectures in English (Chien & Hsu, 2011). They

reacted positively and benefited most from the policy (Kung & Wu, 2010). Su (2016) indicated that placement practice granted teachers a more interactive classroom atmosphere, affecting affirmatively students' learning and teachers' teaching. Lee and Su (2009) also asserted that students progressed significantly after receiving placement instruction. The difference was particularly obvious among intermediate-level students who showed recognizable improvement in reading (Weng, 2011; L. C. Yang & Lee, 2014); however, the statistics from H. C. Chang and Feng (2010) revealed that such practice led to insignificant alternations in students' learning outcome, with reading and listening in particular.

Although increasing researches have offered appreciated findings on several aspects of EGP and the influence of English-proficiency placement policy on EGP education in Taiwan, students' perceptions of the program have remained scanty, not to mention students' suggestions for better EGP curriculum design, especially with qualitative analysis.

Glense (2006) suggested that quantitative research methods are designed for the purpose of making generalization about some social phenomena and providing causal explanations. On the other hand, qualitative research methods are the best tools to understand some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved. In addition, the data from qualitative interviews would help illuminate the motives behind students' consonant and contradictory responses. Together, they increase validity and permit more insights into the issues studied. To explore more university students' perception of EGP, a mix-methodological approach, using both quantitative data (elicited from the results of questionnaires) and qualitative narratives (obtained via face-to-face interviews) was adopted in this study. Five research questions were emphasized:

(1) How did university students in Taiwan perceive EGP?

(2) Based on them, what improvements could be made to advance EGP teaching and learning?

(3) How were the students' perceptions of the EGP and their opinion

on the advancement of EGP different based on gender?

(4) How were the students' perceptions of the EGP and their opinion on the advancement of EGP different based on their English proficiency?

(5) How were the students' perceptions of the EGP and their opinion on the advancement of EGP different based on their grade level?

2. Methods

2.1 Setting

This was a case study of the EGP curriculum at a university located in western Taiwan. For confidentiality, it was identified here as 'University K (UK).' EGP curriculum at the UK was designed by the Center of Languages and Culture with the mission to familiarize students with four language skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing) and develop their language proficiency, communication skills and aesthetic appreciation. English Reading and English Listening are the two principal courses offered. Like most universities in Taiwan, freshmen at UK were sorted into three English-proficiency levels (elementary, intermediated and advanced) based on their scores on College Entrance Exam (CEE) or College Entrance Examination in Specified Subjects (CEESS) once they were enrolled. It ranged from CEFR A1 to CEFR B1. A pre-sketched unified course guideline, syllabus and curriculum plan for each level has been executed. Accordingly, the instructors of each level must use the same textbooks, follow the same schedule and standardized course objectives and apply the same grading policy. Besides regular class meetings, various extracurricular activities, such as English corner, [4] Writing Clinic and TOEIC workshops, were held regularly to give

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[4] Non-regular English conversation classes taught by English-native speakers using movies or other audio-video resources as materials to provide the experiences of total-immersed learning, resulting in natural acquisition of listening and speaking.

students more access to language learning opportunities and resources.

2.2 Samples

Two hundred and twenty-five students were surveyed. Seventy-two percent (162) of the participants were female and 28% (63) were male. Statistics about the students' year at school were freshmen: 81 (36%), sophomore 45 (20%), junior: 57 (25%), and senior: 42 (19%). For English proficiency, 81 (36%) of them were placed at elementary level, 88 (39%) were at intermediate and 56 (25%) were at advanced. One hundred and twelve of the subjects (50%) revealed that they have learned English for 11 to 16 years, suggesting that many of them had an early English learning experience, starting probably at preschool.

According to their willingness revealed via the inquiry listed in the Part Three of the questionnaire, almost 100 students were contacted; while 40 students (ten from each grade level) were purposively chosen for the interview. Grade level was used as criteria for participant selection because it was a variation guaranteeing the inclusion of students with different backgrounds and English proficiency, allowing the searches for norms across greater variations. For confidentiality and distinguishability, a pseudonym was used and a code was assigned to each interviewed student at the data analysis phase (See Table 1 for examples of student codes).

2.3 Instrument and Procedure

A Students' Perception on English for General Purposes (EGP) Courses questionnaire adapted from the studies by J. Chang (2017), Chia et al. (1999) and Chien and Hsu (2011) was administered. It had three sections. Part One listed questions relevant to learners' basic background information, including gender, school year, English-proficiency level,

and years of learning English. Part Two contained two sub-sections. Section A listed 21 statements regarding students' general opinions on EGP. The aspects investigated included English-proficiency placement policy, numbers of students in one class, class meeting time, students' learning achievement, etc. Section B were 13 statements about students' suggestions for EGP curriculum improvement in the future, for example, the reduction of student numbers in one class, more English-related courses, language-exchange opportunities… and so on. Part Three was a question to inquire about students' willingness to participate in face-to-face interviews.

In order to help the students precisely understand the content of the questionnaire, a Chinese version, translated and examined by the researchers' colleagues was applied. Students were asked to rate each statement on a five-point Liker scale in line with their agreement (strongly agree = 5 → totally disagree = 1). A pilot study was performed after the completion of the questionnaire. It was then re-amended and finalized based on the result. The questionnaire was uploaded onto Google Survey. The survey link was sent via email to the school-student mail list to all of the registered undergraduate students in May of 2019. The result was downloaded two months later until no more responses appeared.

2.4 Interviews Protocol

Weiss (1994) contented that the interview was the best way of understanding people's inner experiences, perception and interpretations, which were oftentimes affected by their thoughts and feelings about a particular incident. The accounts given by the interviewees were a convenient channel, offering faithful as well as reliable peek at the phenomena studied. In this study, face-to-face semi-structured interviews in Chinese were conducted. The whole processes were audio-recorded. Each lasted 15-20 minutes. Two major open-ended descriptive questions

derived from the questionnaire theme were used (Karner & Warren, 2010). They were (a) How do you feel about the curriculum design of EGP? and (b) What do you think that the school can do in order to improve the EGP curriculum? Supplementary questions, such as "Can you tell me what you have acquired at EGP?" or "Do you think that EGP is helpful to your job seeking, advanced study or participation in standard English proficiency tests (SEPTs) in the future?" or "Do you think EGP help increase your English learning motivation or confidence in using/speaking English?" were then asked to explore more for particular themes, concepts, and ideas mentioned (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition, various tell-me-more probes, such as "What do you mean when you say…? or "Can you explain more about…?" or "Why exactly do you think that way?" were applied to clarify obscure ideas or demand more information to continue the conversation until the research objectives were satisfied (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

The "tree and branch model" [5] was practiced during the whole interview process. Two of the main questions were first asked. The follow-up questions drawn from each interviewee's responses to each main question followed. Along with these were appropriate probes (such as repetition of particular words with questioning intonations or asking questions for more detail) used to ensure vivid and detailed elaboration from the interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data were analyzed using statistics analysis for means (*Mean*), frequency (*F*) and percentage (*P*) marking

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[5] In the tree and branch model, "the interview is likened to tree with the trunk as the research problem and the branches as the main research questions. Each deals with a separate but more or less equal concern. In the interviews, the researcher would try to ask all the main questions and then follow up on each obtain the same degree of depth, detail, richness and nuance" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 145).

on each participant's responses to each statement. The data were further sorted into various categories and analyzed using Independent t-test and One-way ANOVA in order to uncover any possible similarities and differences among the learners according to their gender, English proficiency and grade levels. All of the quantitative analysis was integrated with qualitative data later. The interview contents were translated and transcribed verbatim at the stage of qualitative analysis. Following the translation and transcription were the identification of concepts, themes, events and topical markers.[6] The last phase of data analysis was coding. Applicable codes were mainly derived from the located concepts, themes, events, topical markers, or the reviewed literatures pertaining to the issues investigated. The classification of codes was (I) perception: learners' opinion on EGP, including class arrangement, learning improvement and so on and (II) improvement: students' proposal to advance EGP, for example freedom of textbook selection, more English-related courses… etc. (See Table 1 for the examples of interview content with applied theme codes)

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[6] According to Rubin & Rubin (2005), concepts are words or terms representing an idea important to research problems. Themes are summary statements and explanations for what is happening. Events are occurrences that have taken place. Topical markers are names of places, people, organizations, pets, numbers… and so on (p. 207).

Table 1

Themes and criterion on students' interview result

Theme	Criterion	Example	Theme coding	Student coding
I. General opinion	a. English-proficiency placement policy b. Class arrangement c. Usefulness of EGP d. Learning improvement e. Learning materials	1. I think more than 50 students in one class was too large. (John, S3/3) 2. But I don't think the result of the placement was totally correct. I was at level one. It was too easy for me. Jonny (S2/5)	I-b I-a	1. John, S3/3 indicated that John was the 3rd junior interviewee. 2. Jonny (S2/5) meant that Johny was the 5th sophomore interviewee.
II. Suggestions for EGP improvement	a. Amendment to English proficiency placement b. Class arrangement alternation c. Freedom of textbook selection d. More courses for language-skill development e. ESP courses f. SEPTs-related courses g. Language exchange	1. The information about SEPTs matters. Since English benchmark is part of the degree requisite. The school should at least allow us the books helpful in taking SEPTs. (Scott, S3/5) 2. The learning in college should be different. I expected more chances to speak and practice English, for example making friends with foreigners on campus since it has been internationalized. I can teach them Chinese. They teach me English. Kim (S1/7)	II-c II-g	1. Scott, S3/5 indicated that Scott was the 5th junior interviewee. 2. Kim (S1/7) meant that Kelly was the 7th freshmen interviewee.

3. Results

The analysis of learner perspectives on the EGP was presented in this section which was divided into two subdivisions. Each provided responses not only on how students perceive EGP and what can be done to improve it, but also on how gender, grade level and English proficiency have influenced their opinions.

3.1 Students' Opinions on EGP

The students' attitude towards EGP were calculated by computing the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the responses to Items 1-21 (statements about students' general opinions on EGP listed in Section A of the questionnaire). A mean of 3.26 was obtained. Hence, it could be concluded that the students slightly and positively reacted to EGP in general (see Table 2). The positiveness was also disclosed in the interviews in which a means for continuous learning was one reason. "I think the classes were necessary. Because I was a lazy person, I thought I would stop learning English without the weekly EGP," stated James (S2/3). A way of maintaining English proficiency was the other.

> *A lot of people said that our English proficiency decreases gradually from senior high school to college. We often joked that our English proficiency was at the top when we were at the 3ʳᵈ year of senior high school, and we will be at the lowest point when we are seniors in colleges. The EGP helps us review. It somehow helps to prevent our English ability from straightly declining.* (Rudy, S2/2)

An Independent t-test was computed to examine the differences in male and female learners' perceptions of EGP. The result suggested that there was no significant effect for gender, $t(223) = 1.63$, $d = 0.24$, despite

male students ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.72$) reporting higher scores than females ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.61$). (see Table 2) In addition, two one-way ANOVA were conducted to compare the differences using two variables (grade level and English proficiency) in the students' general opinion on EGP. The result showed that the effects of either grade level ($F(3, 218) = 3.67$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$) or English proficiency ($F(2, 220) = .55$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$) was non-significant. (see Table 3 for statistics)

Table 2

Independent t-test results of students' general attitude towards EGP

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p	d
All participants	225	3.26	0.64			
Gender						
male	63	3.36	0.72	1.63	0.09	0.24
female	162	3.20	0.61			

Table 3

ANOVA results of students' general attitude towards EGP

Grade	N	Mean	SD	F	p	η^{2a}	Follow-up comparison (Bonferroni)
F[b]	81	3.28	0.63				
SO[c]	45	3.15	0.72	3.67	0.78	0.00	
J[d]	57	3.27	0.57				
SE[e]	42	3.26	0.70				

Proficiency	N	Mean	SD	F	p	η^2	Follow-up comparison (Bonferroni)
E[f]	81	3.31	0.59				
I[g]	88	3.22	0.61	0.55	0.58	0.00	
A[h]	56	3.23	0.80				

Note. [a] d of 0.2 is small size; 0.5 is medium; 0.8 is large. [b] freshman;
[c] sophomore; [d] junior; [e] senior; [f] elementary; [g] intermediate; [h] advance

In order to scrutinize students' opinions on the specific aspects of EGP, the survey items listed in Section A were categorized into five different themes: English-proficiency placement policy (EPP), class arrangement (CA), usefulness of EGP (UEGP), learning improvement (LI), and learning materials (LM), the factors that were believed to closely relate to and influence significantly the effectiveness of the EGP courses (J. Chang, 2017; Chia et al., 1999; Chien & Hsu, 2011; Huang, 1996, 1997, 1998; Kung & Wu, 2010; L. C. Yang & Lee, 2014).

The insignificant p value ($p > .05$) revealed in Table 4 suggested that neither grade level nor English proficiency played a role in students' opinion on each aspect regarding EGP. Of all of the five factors, the one with the highest mean was English-proficiency placement policy ($M = 3.62$), indicating students' sanction for the practice (see Table 4 for mean score). The result was in line with previous studies in which the policy was affirmatively welcomed and the practice was considerably effective (Chien & Hsu, 2011; Kung & Wu, 2010; Lee & Su, 2009; L. C. Yang & Lee, 2014; Su, 2016; Weng, 2011). The satisfaction was reflected in the survey as almost 64% of the participants agreed that proficiency-placement practice was helpful (see Table 5 for frequency). Notwithstanding the endorsement, the students in the interviews questioned the outcomes of the placement. Some (almost a quarter of the interviewees and more than half of the survey participants) thought that they were placed at the wrong level, usually the lower one, as Jonny (S2/5) revealed, "But I don't think the result of the placement was totally correct. I was at level one. It was too easy for me." Some (almost one-fifth of the interviewees) doubted of the validity. "The school used our English scores of CEE and CEESS to level us. My reading ability was not good, but listening ability was pretty good. I was then placed at level one. It seemed unfair to me," complained Teresa (S4/7). The practice was thought controversial by the students who enrolled without CEE or CEESS scores and were leveled using the result of the proficiency

test given by the Center of Languages and Culture. They questioned its credibility. "It failed to reflect our true English competence. Some of my classmates hide their true ability at the test. They failed the test purposefully and was placed at level one for easy grade," suggested Trista (S4/3).

Table 4

ANOVA results of students' perception towards EGP based on themes, grade level and English proficiency

Variable	Grade[f]	*Mean*	*F*	*p*	η^2	Proficiency[g]	*Mean*	*F*	*p*	η^2
EPP[a]	F	3.67	0.51	0.68	0.01	E	3.49	2.30	0.10	0.02
	SO	3.48				I	3.61			
	J	3.66				A	3.81			
	SE	3.60								
	ALL	3.62								
CA[b]	F	3.61	1.97	0.12	0.02	E	3.62	0.74	0.48	0.01
	SO	3.41				I	3.49			
	J	3.43				A	3.59			
	SE	3.72								
	ALL	3.55								
UEGP[c]	F	3.12	0.07	0.98	0.00	E	3.20	0.58	0.56	0.00
	SO	3.13				I	3.10			
	J	3.13				A	3.06			
	SE	3.07								
	ALL	3.12								
LI[d]	F	3.20	0.42	0.74	0.01	E	3.32	0.66	0.52	0.01
	SO	3.13				I	3.18			
	J	3.30				A	3.20			
	SE	3.29								
	ALL	3.23								
LM[e]	F	3.28	0.71	0.55	0.01	E	3.31	0.52	0.60	0.00
	SO	3.10				I	3.28			
	J	3.30				A	3.18			
	SE	3.31								
	ALL	3.26								

Note. [a] English-proficiency placement policy; [b] class arrangement; [c] usefulness of EGP; [d] learning improvement; [e] learning materials; [f] Please refer to Table 3 for the full form of each grade level; [g] Please refer to Table 3 for the full form of each proficiency level.

Table 5

Students' general opinions on EGP

Categories A-E	Percentage of students' agreement (%)
The students thought that	
A. English-proficiency placement policy	
1. they were placed at the right level of English proficiency for EGP.	48.4
2. proficiency placement practice was helpful.	63.5
B. Class arrangement	
3. 50 students in one class was appropriate.	46.3
4. four hours of meeting per week was sufficient.	67.0
C. Usefulness of EGP	
5. EGP was helpful to benchmark-related standard English proficiency tests (SEPTs).	32.9
6. EGP was helpful to future career.	34.0
7. EGP courses were practical.	32.9
8. they benefited a lot from EGP learning.	36.8
D. Learning improvement	
9. their English ability was enhanced after EGP studying.	32.9
10. their oral English communication proficiency was improved after EGP studying.	39.8
（continued）	

11.	their reading ability was improved after EGP studying.	47.5
12.	their listening ability was improved after EGP studying.	47.1
13.	their writing ability was improved after EGP studying.	26.7
E. Learning materials		
14.	the textbooks for EGP triggered their learning interest.	30.4
15.	the textbooks for EGP were in line with their English proficiency.	52.4
16.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for learning English.	48.6
17.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for improving their English proficiency.	42.8
18.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for improving their oral English communication proficiency.	33.5
19.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for improving their reading proficiency.	48.7
20.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for improving their listening proficiency.	45.5
21.	the textbooks for EGP were helpful for improving their writing proficiency.	28.4

The factor that received the second highest mean was class arrangement ($M = 3.55$). The outcome suggested that the students were satisfied with class meeting time (4 hours per week) and student numbers in one class (50 people) despite the variance reported in the survey data. Although 67% of the respondents satisfied with the class meeting hour, no more than half of them (46.3%) thought a class packed with 50 students was appropriate. The enunciation from the interviews revealed further an inconsistency. Many students (almost one third of the interviewees) thought that the meeting time was insufficient and ineffective, as Tina (S3/5) confirmed,

The meeting hours for us, the students who really want to study English, were too short. I literally learned nothing. Although I don't want to admit and say… I think I learned more at the senior high school because we met more often, which made me take learning English more seriously.

More than half of the students in the interviews indicated that the class size was too big. "I think more than 50 students in one class was too large," emphasized John (S3/3). Some even thought that the arrangement caused "left-out" situations and hindered them from learning:

Because there were too many students in my class, I think my teacher couldn't take very good care of us, especially the slow learners, like me. It was impossible to make her pay attention to me. My English proficiency was bad already. I did not learn well at EGP since there were so many students. (Andy, S3/7)

Learning materials with a mean of 3.26 were the factor placed at the top-third. Students' opinions about materials were neutral mixing with criticism and compliment. The complaint from the students revealed its

lack of variety and usability. "The main textbook should be more diverse and practical, reflecting what is happening in our real world," said Randy (S2/6). According to Mia (S3/6), this "monotone" caused a learning obstacle, influencing significantly her willingness to learn:

> *My reading teacher asked us to memorize lots of poetry. It was not practical and boring. Course materials should be more interesting and diverse. I think these materials demotivate us, making the students who hate English loathe English more.*

Contrarily, the commendation asserted their profitableness, as Jimmy (S4/6) contended, "For reading and writing, because of the textbooks, I read articles of different genres and learned writing techniques. I think they were good experiences."

Showing little approbation, not many of the survey respondents recognized the helpfulness of the textbooks used in improving their proficiency of four skills or triggered their learning interest, although 52.5% of them did confirm that the books were in line with their English proficiency.

Learning improvement ($M = 3.23$) was the factor following learning materials. The order revealed students' neutrality about EGP. Namely, they neither benefited from nor made any significant progresses during EGP studying. Nevertheless, close scrutiny on the interview data revealed a contrastive scenario. The interview students revealed that their English proficiency was actually enhanced for three major capacities. The first and most-refereed one (by almost half of the interview and survey students) was listening. Constant practices were the main causes. "Because I had to practice listening every week. I made huge improvements," said Kelly (S2/3). Speaking was the second-frequently mention (by one-third of the interview students and almost 40% of the survey students). Teachers' instruction played a crucial role in the advancement.

Communication-oriented activity provided chances for interaction, and thus developed students' speaking ability, as Kim confirmed, "My teacher posted questions and asked us to interact with our classmates very often. It was good because it forced me to communicate in English, which improved my speaking ability." The third skill specified was vocabulary (by ten interview students). The improvement was highly associated with extensive reading, as Luke (S4/6) pointed out, "My vocabulary expanded. Since I had chances to read many articles of different genres, I learned lots of new words."

Among the five elements, usefulness of EGP had the lowest mean ($M = 3.12$), showing students' discontent with EGP. The disapproval was asserted in the survey. Only more than one-third of respondents agreed that EGP courses were practical (32.9%), and helpful to benchmark-related standard English proficiency test (32.9%), and future career (34%). Not many of them (36.8%) thought they benefited a lot from EGP learning. The root of the problem was "learning detachment", which led the students to the fruitless feeling of EGP for future career-seeking. Students only need to take EGP during the freshman year. If no other advanced courses are offered and mandated afterwards, they surely stop learning English once completing the courses.

> *The time of taking the courses was too far away from the time of job-seeking. I took the courses when I was a freshman and seek for a job after graduating. There is a 3-year gap in between. Most of us do not study English during that period of time.* (Leo, S3/9)

Without continuous learning, their English ability degrades naturally. The situation is actually disadvantageous considering the importance of English in the job market in Taiwan (V. W. Chang, 2006). Another reason leading to the impotence of EGP was the English graduation

benchmark (or English threshold). [7] The dissatisfaction was chiefly about the irrelevance of EGP to SEPTs. "The information or materials regarding SEPTs were not mentioned at all at EGP courses," responded Ming (S3/10). Some of them (almost one quarter of the interview students) insisted that EGP should not merely be helpful in taking SEPTs. It should be the threshold itself, as Kevin (S4/5) contended, "EGP should be part of the English threshold policy. If I pass the courses, I can then graduate. There is no need to take other SEPTs for the benchmark. Doing so increases my willingness to learn."

There was a significant effect for gender, $t(1.21)$, $p = 0.01$ for CA and $t(.76)$, $p = 0.02$ for UEGP, with male students receiving higher scores than female students (Table 6). The results indicated that compared to females ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.67$), male students ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.83$) satisfied more the class arrangement, including students number in one class and class meeting. They ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.01$) also believed more the usefulness of EGP course, such as practicality than female students ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.78$). However, since the d values of CA ($d = 0.17$) and UEGP ($d = 0.11$) were smaller than 0.2, it was suggested that the effect of gender was trivial despite its statistical significance.

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[7] English graduation benchmark (English threshold) was a language proficient-requirement policy encouraged by the MOE in Taiwan since 2003 in order to better-prepare university students to meet the anticipated English prerequisite from both domestic and international job markets. Based on the policy, student must take SEPTs and achieve a specified score as a threshold set by each school to demonstrate a sufficient level of English proficiency for graduation (Hsieh, 2017; Hsu & Wang, 2006; Newfield & Pan, 2011, 2012; Shih, 2010; Tsai & Tsou, 2009; Wu, 2012).

Table 6

Independent t-test results of students' perception towards EGP based on themes and gender

Variable[a]	Gender	*Mean*	*t*	*p*	*d*
EPP	M	3.82	2.23	0.29	0.32
	F	3.53			
CA	M	3.65	1.21	0.01	0.17
	F	3.52			
UEGP	M	3.19	0.76	0.02	0.11
	F	3.09			
LI	M	3.32	1.10	0.14	0.16
	F	3.19			
LM	M	3.43	2.29	0.22	0.33
	F	3.18			

Note. [a] Please refer to Table 4 for the full form of each variable.

3.2 Students' Suggestions for Better EGP Curriculum Design

The 13 statements (listed in Section B) regarding students' viewpoints on better EGP curriculum design were sorted into several aspects withal, including amendment to English-proficiency placement (AEPP), class arrangement alternation (CAA), freedom of textbook selection (FTS), more courses for language-skill development (MLSD), ESP courses (ESP), SEPTs-related courses (SEPTs), and language exchange (LE).

A "small-medium" ($d = 0.33$) significant gender effect was observed for the variable, class arrangement alternation (CAA), $t(2.102)$, $p = .00$ (Table 7), with men ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.09$) reporting higher scores than women ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.83$), thus indicating that compared to females, males students thought that some alteration in class arrangement,

including class size and meeting hours were better notwithstanding their stronger approval of the arrangement revealed in their opinion regarding EGP previously. In addition, a one way analysis of variance showed that the influence of English proficiency on SEPTs-related courses (SEPTs) was significant, $F(2,220) = 6.202$, $p = 0.00$. Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni for significance revealed that students of elementary level ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.82$) welcomed more significantly the opportunities for SEPTs-related instruction than advance-level learners ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.90$). The d value of SEPTs was 0.05, suggesting that the influence of English proficiency among the two groups for the ideas about SEPTs was medium (Table 8).

Table 7

Independent t-test results of male and female students' suggestion for better EGP design

Variables	Gender	*Mean*	*t*	*p*	*d*
AEPP[a]	M	3.22	0.80	0.08	0.11
	F	3.09			
CAA[b]	M	3.26	2.10	0.00	0.33
	F	2.95			
FTS[c]	M	4.37	2.60	0.17	0.38
	F	4.06			
MLSD[d]	M	4.18	2.72	0.08	0.38
	F	3.90			
ESP[e]	M	4.20	0.13	0.14	0.02
	F	4.19			
SEPTs[f]	M	3.54	1.14	0.36	0.16
	F	3.40			
LE[g]	M	4.22	1.60	0.55	0.24
	F	4.03			

Note. [a] amendment to English-proficiency placement; [b] class arrangement alternation; [c] freedom of textbook selection; [d] more courses for language-skill development; [e] ESP courses; [f] SEPTs-related courses; [g] language exchange

Table 8

ANOVA results of students' suggestion for better EGP design with themes, grade level and English proficiency

Variables[a]	Grades[b]	*Mean*	*F*	*p*	η^2	Proficiency[c]	*Mean*	*F*	*p*	η^2	Bonferroni
AEPP	F	3.22	2.16	0.10	0.03	E	3.21	0.83	0.44	0.01	
	SO	3.24				I	3.02				
	J	3.15				A	3.22				
	SE	2.73									
	ALL	3.12									
CAA	F	2.86	1.70	0.17	0.02	E	3.15	0.85	0.43	0.01	
	SO	3.18				I	3.00				
	J	3.12				A	2.96				
	SE	3.14									
	ALL	3.04									
FTS	F	4.01	1.75	0.16	0.02	E	4.20	0.35	0.70	0.01	
	SO	4.33				I	4.10				
	J	4.22				A	4.19				
	SE	4.11									
	ALL	4.15									
MLSD	F	3.81	2.74	0.04	0.04	E	4.07	1.08	0.34	0.01	
	SO	4.14				I	3.92				
	J	4.06				A	3.95				
	SE	4.04									
	ALL	3.99									
ESP	F	4.04	2.53	0.06	0.03	E	4.22	0.34	0.71	0.00	
	SO	4.38				I	4.19				
	J	4.29				A	4.12				
	SE	4.14									
	ALL	4.19									
SEPTs	F	3.32	0.74	0.53	0.01	E	3.69	6.20	0.00	0.05	E > A
	SO	3.56				I	3.39				
	J	3.44				A	3.15				
	SE	3.49									
	ALL	3.43									
LE	F	4.02	0.65	0.59	0.01	E	4.09	0.05	0.96	0.00	
	SO	4.23				I	4.07				
	J	4.07				A	4.11				
	SE	4.07									
	ALL	4.09									

Note. [a] Please refer to Table 7 for the full form of each variable; [b] Please refer to Table 3 for the full form of each grade level; [c] Please refer to Table 3 for the full form of each proficiency level.

Among all of the aspects, "ESP (English for specified purposes) courses" received the highest mean (M = 4.19) with almost 87.5% approval rate for Business or Professional English and 76% for academic English (See Table 8 and Table 9). Students in the interviews admitted the necessity of such courses and insisted that they should be offered as optional and for non-freshmen. "EGP for freshmen are more general and basic. The school should provide some ESP courses for the students interested in other topics, such as business or medicine. They should be elective for sophomore, junior and senior," stated Ling (S2/3). According to the students, ESP courses were excellent channels for continuous and advanced English learning. They were part of the foundation to prepare students for a better career in the future as well, as Linda (S4/1) described,

> *We were freer as juniors and seniors since most of the major-related courses were completed. It will be good if we are offered ESP courses. We can maintain, or even improve our English. Because English is so important when we enter the job market, I personally think these courses help to better prepare us for our future career.*

Table 9
Students' suggestion for better EGP design

Categories A-G	Percentage of students' agreement (%)
To improve EGP, the students suggested that	
A. Amendment to English-proficiency placement	
1. English proficiency placement practice should be altered from the current 3 levels to 4 or 5 levels.	37.8
B. Class arrangement alternation	
2. students number in one class should be altered from 50 to 30.	40.9
3. class meeting hours should be increased from 4 to 6 or even more per week.	28.3
C. Freedom of textbook selection	
4. EGP instructors should be allowed to choose the teaching materials they prefer.	84.5
D. More courses for language-skill development	
5. more oral English communication courses should be offered.	81.4
6. more reading courses should be offered.	66.6
7. more listening courses should be offered.	76.8
8. more writing courses should be offered.	70.2
E. ESP courses	
9. more courses of special English, such as Business English or Professional English should be offered.	87.5
10. more advanced-English courses, such as academic English should be offered.	76.0
F. SEPTs-related courses	
11. the courses related to standard English proficiency tests (SEPTs) should be offered.	72.0
12. EGP courses should all be changed to SEPT-related courses in order to help us to meet the English graduation benchmark.	32.0
G. Language exchange	
13. opportunity to exchange languages with the foreign students at school should be arranged.	75.5

The category following ESP courses was "freedom of textbook selection" (M = 4.15) with 84.5% of agreement from the survey respondents. Without doubt, textbooks play a critical role in the classrooms. They were one of the six imperative components of a language curriculum (J. D. Brown, 1995) and the sources (sometimes the only one) of L2 input in language instruction settings.[8] They not only conveyed a certain view of the target culture for learners, but also publicized knowledge to construct students' perception and beliefs about the target language.

Similar to the first context described in Matsuda (2012),[9] teachers at the UK were stipulated to use the same textbook fit for each level in order to fulfill the pre-outlined learning-efficacy guidelines (as described above). The intention was to provide a coherent English learning experience. However, judging from the result of the surveys, students seemed to reject it. Several students (more than one-fourth) grumbled in the interviews that the textbooks used, despite the authentic L2 input, failed to catch up with the current World-English trend. They argued over teachers' and students' right to material selection:

I think the textbook should be more "realistic". The speakers in the audio of listening textbooks were too "native". Now, many language proficiency tests, like TOEIC, have embraced multi-national accents, like British English or Indian English. So, many elements, such as multi-national accents or other current trends, should be taken into

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[8] According to J. D. Brown (1995), the six imperative components of a language curriculum were textbooks, needs analysis, goals and objectives, testing, teaching, and program evaluation.

[9] Four contexts for freedom of material selection were described in Matsuda (2012): (1) all teachers in a program are expected to use the same textbook with the incorporation of supplemental materials, such as short reading or audio/video clips; (2) teachers are allowed to select any textbooks without any guidelines or guidance; (3) programs (or students) cannot afford textbooks; and (4) teachers and students use the same textbooks every year (p. 169).

consideration for material selection. Teachers and we should be given the right to choose the appropriate textbooks. This helps us not only learn English, but also know the world better. (Lilly, S2/3)

Besides practicality, several students (almost one-fifth) in the interviews reasoned about the necessity of materials related to SEPTs, given the importance of English threshold for graduation. They asked for the access to relevant materials. "The information about SEPTs matters. Since English benchmark is part of the degree requisite, the school should at least allow us the books helpful in taking SEPTs," responded Scott (S3/5).

"Language exchange" ($M = 4.09$) was students' third pick. In the domain of ESL (English as a second language), language exchange (also termed conversation exchange) has been proven to effectively increase learners' learning autonomy (Pickard & Voller, 1996; Ueno, 2019). Based on Dickinson (1987), it had two forms. The first one was mutual-language exchange in which the learners of two different languages peer-teach and learn with each other. The other one was expert-informant learning, referring to the situation where the native speaker of the target language acted as a consultant. Judging from the result of interviews, the students preferred the former format, as Kim (S1/7) asserted, "The learning in college should be different. I expected more chances to speak and practice English, for example making friends with foreigners on campus since it has been internationalized. I can teach them Chinese. They teach me English." Kim's comment was contended by the respondents of the survey as 75.5% of them agreed that the opportunity to exchange languages with foreign students at school should be arranged.

Following language exchange was "more courses for language-skill development". The mean was 3.99. Among all of the skill-related courses, communication was the one mentioned repeatedly in the interviews (with 81.4% of approval rate from the respondents of the survey). The

students identified their lack of conversation skills to interact with foreigners. Many (two-thirds of the interviewees) asserted the importance of communication development for their career (Y. J. Chang et al., 2011; Chien & Hsu, 2011; Y. L. Yang, 1985), thus emphasizing the necessity of communication-oriented courses in the EGP curriculum for non-freshmen. They believed that the arrangement would generate a valid learning outcome, as Jane (S4/1) commented,

Courses for oral communication should be offered for junior or senior students. They are the best because students taking the courses are oftentimes the ones who are eager to improve their communication competence, which is what many of us need but lack. With the thirst, they have stronger motivation to talk and to communicate. That, without doubt, will result in greater learning efficacy.

4. Discussion

The purposes of the study were to investigate university students' opinion about EGP, their suggestion for better EGP curriculum design and the possible influence of gender, grade level and English proficiency on their perspectives regarding EGP. In order to provide indicative findings for the issues, a mix-methodical approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, was applied.

The result confirmed that the students approved the implementation of EGP. Gender affected the learners' idea about class arrangement. Male students approved more of the usefulness of EGP and showed a stronger satisfaction with class size and meeting time. However, they were also the ones asserted that class arrangement alteration, such as the reduction of student number in one class and class meeting time were necessary, if possible. English proficiency played a role in the students' suggestion of

SEPTs-related adjustments, with elementary-level students welcoming more the opportunities than advance-level learners.

A further statistical analysis of the quantitative-survey data asserted that they accepted best the practice of English-proficiency placement policy, followed by classroom arrangement, learning materials and learning improvement. The usefulness of EGP was the factor which was rejected the strongest. The result of the positiveness about English-proficiency placement policy and class arrangement reported in the quantitative survey differed from students' accounts displayed in the qualitative interviews. Students uncovered their concerns in their narrations. They doubted about the fairness and validity of the result of the proficient placement test and the practice of the policy per se. They thought that a four-hour class meeting per week was short, and the class size of 50 students was too big. Students' viewpoints about learning materials were neutral. Their criticisms pointed out the insufficiency of variation of textbook contents and the impracticability in the world outside the classrooms; whilst the credits were given for their helpfulness to English learning in the classrooms.

The main cause of students' frustration with the usefulness of EGP was the existing learning gap. Most of them discontinued English learning after completing EGP, which was detrimental to their career after graduation. They also complained about the inapplicability of EGP to SEPTs, the tests closely-related to school graduation policy. Based on the students, knowledge of SEPTs was neglected at EGP. The students in the interviews expressed their English improvement for three language skills via EGP despite the low ranking. The most-mentioned skill was listening, which according to them, was mainly resulted from constant practices at classes. The second skill was speaking. They attributed the growth to teachers' communicative-oriented instruction. The last skill was vocabulary expanded owing to extensive reading.

For better EGP curriculum design, the opportunity of elective

ESP courses for non-freshmen was anticipated the most. The content of the interviews confirmed the necessity of the courses for advanced English learning. The students believed courses such as Business English or Medical English were not only beneficial to non-freshmen, but also helpful to future job-seeking. Freedom of textbook selection was the second-welcomed factor. Students were disappointed at the unified textbooks used currently because of their failure in reflecting the World-English trend and providing information about SEPTs. They insisted on the right to textbook selection for themselves and teachers. Following textbook selection was language exchange opportunity. The result from interviews observed that mutual-language exchange was the format preferred as now internationalization has become the tendency on campuses. The students also accepted the idea of more courses for language-skill development. In the interviews, communication skill was considered the most critical by the students. Thus, they contended the essentiality of communicative-oriented classes for non-freshmen as a continuous learning.

The conversations regarding EGP have never ceased since its inauguration at the programs of higher education in Taiwan. With the increasing significance of English on campuses and in both domestic and international job markets, the attention on EGP will continue and even intensify. The result of the study consisted with previous findings, asserting the need for advanced textbooks, better assessment and student-centered teaching method with emphasis on role playing and problem solving to increase students' proficiency in oral / aural skills (J. Chang, 2017; Chia et al., 1999; Mehrdad, 2011). The following discussions address the matters raised by the participant students. They benefit both university English instructors and curriculum designers. Despite their particularity in the case-studied school, they extend to other higher-education contexts in Taiwan and EFL settings in the world as well.

4.1 Teaching English using unified textbooks

Howard (2003) noted that learners learn better when the content of the materials is meaningful and relevant to them. Matsuda (2012) argued that "materials should be based on – or compatible with – the way of teaching and learning that teachers and learners are familiar with, and ideally should draw from the strength of approaches they are already accustomed to" (p, 178). Teachers and students are first-hand users of textbooks. They should be given the right of material selection. However, if impossible, tips from Harmer (2015) still allow teachers' bringing of their personality into the classrooms and permit students a satisfactory learning experience: (a) Omit things that don't fit: teachers simply leave the things that they think are unnecessary or inappropriate for their students under the premise that the materials omitted are not the focus of subsequent testing; (2) Replace things with teachers' own choices: when omitting section is not an ideal option, teachers then replace. They can replace the inadequate part in the textbook with materials (and activities) which they believe work better for themselves and the students. However, when doing so, the original intention of the replaced material must be kept. For instance, if the past prefect tense was introduced in the replaced material, the teachers need to find their own preferred materials which deal with the same grammatical points; (3) Adapt and add things: this is the best way of using a textbook and making the contents come alive for the students. To adapt, teachers can ask students to expand dialogues and exchange to make them longer and more interesting, or ask them to search the internet to find more things about the topic of a text. For example, the students in the study insisted on the exposure of different varieties of English. Therefore, for the topic, Tourism in Singapore, teachers can ask students to search the online video released by the Tourism Bureau of Singapore as an adaption and addition. Doing so enables the students to understand that English diversity is not merely different pronunciation

or lexical features, but a broader encompassing presentation of culture, linguistics and other values.

4.2 Working with a large class of learners

Students' requests for class reduction in the study reflected teachers' actual needs at many EFL settings (Li, 1998; Liao, 2004). Regardless of the demand, it was the school authorities who make curriculum-related administrative decisions. Sadly, according to Saengboon (2002), they were oftentimes the ones making inadequate judgments. Class size was unfortunately one of them. If class reduction is unavailable, elements summarized based on H. D. Brown (2007) and Wharton and Race (1999) can still guarantee teachers and students successful large-group learning and teaching experiences. Teachers should remember each of the student's names. Such action allows teachers to show their awareness and respect to students as individuals. In doing so, students will feel that they are important and believe that their presence and contribution will be valued in class. Teachers can maximize learner participation via pair-work or group-work. Various pair (group) techniques are available. According to Harmer (2015), think-pair-share mode fits just about any activities. To do so, teachers ask students to think individually and then pair up with a colleague. The pairs share what they have done with each other. After that, teachers group the pairs with others. Students then share information within groups (p. 138). When pairing (grouping) students, teachers must be aware of students' diverse language proficiencies and skills. To balance, teachers can occasionally put students of the same proficiency and skills in the same group and vice versa. The last technique is calling on students randomly and equally. The best way to ensure equal and random calling is to keep a record of who has or hasn't been called for a lesson or the whole semester.

4.3 Assessing students' English proficiency combining with other methods

Carroll (1961) argued that learners' diverse background and their overall learning experience would make the task of language assessment challenging. Farhady (1982) further claimed that learners' characteristics (gender, university status, major fields of study, and nationality) correlated strongly with their performance. Thus, defining English proficiency using only the result of standard proficiency tests seems injudicious. A self-assessment questionnaire implemented before or after students' participation in the proficiency test could be a helpful tool for compensation. According to Leblanc and Painchaud (1985), a self-assessment questionnaire had the following advantages: (a) It took shorter time to complete compared with placement tests; (b) It ruled out the protections against cheating; and (c) It led students to a higher degree of involvement. A self-assessment questionnaire could be formulated in various forms covering very wide or restricted areas. The frequent-seen one would be listed-descriptive items with points scale. However, no matter what formats, the basic principle of a questionnaire should be to give students the chance to indicate what they can do for the language they have acquired.

Alternation assessment was another good tool to evaluate learners for their four English skills. The Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) provided a good model of performance-based assessment for speaking and writing proficiency. Under IPA, students' level of proficiency was determined according to their comprehension and interpretation of a given authentic texts in English. They need to interact with others in English using speaking and writing skills or present oral and written messages to audiences of listeners and readers (Adair-Huack, Glisan, Koda, Sandrock, & Swemder, 2006). On the other hand, portfolio assessment was often used to assess other language skills. It was a purposeful collection of

evidence used by the teachers and students to monitor students' growth of knowledge and skills (Moore, 1994). According to Farr and Tone (1998) and Chen (2000), what went into students' collection could include, materials reflecting students' cognitive learning development, reaction papers, items displayed students' accomplishment and evidences exhibiting students' skills mastered.

4.4 Communication-featured components

The development of communication competence has been the focus of various existing and reformed English education curriculum in many Asian countries and Taiwan as well. The protocol listed in the early *Challenge 2008: National Development Plan and The Aim for the Top University Project and Teaching Excellence Project* and the recent *2015 The Reformed Project for Multicultural and Multilingual contexts English Learning* actually stated explicitly that the gist of English education was the improvement of the students' English ability (communication competence in particular) so as to expedite Taiwan's internationalization and to intensify its international competitiveness. Despite the ambition, the realization seemed insufficient judging from the students' requests in the current study. To augment, the five CLT (Communication Language Teaching) components proposed by Savignon (2002) could be incorporated and practiced.

(1) Language arts (also termed language analysis): The main focus of language arts is the forms of English, including syntax, morphology, and phonology. Translations, dictation and rote memorization are helpful activities to bring students' attention to language form. Pronunciation exercises and patterned repetition of verb paradigms along with the explanation of morph-syntactic features can be helpful in focusing on forms. For vocabulary expansion, exposition, such as definitions, synonyms and

antonyms can be performed.

(2) Language for a purpose (or language experience): The goals of language experience are the use of English for real and immediate communication. Thus, in EFL settings, although exclusive use of English in the classroom is optional, special attention still needs to be given to providing maximum opportunities for English communication for a purpose. For low-proficient learners or those who are accustomed to being taught exclusively in their first language, efforts should be made to obtain the essence and learn to use strategies for interpretation, expression and negotiation for meaning so as to advance communication competence.

(3) My language is me (or personal English language use): It relates to learners' emerging identity in English, implying respect for learners as they use English for self-expression and recognize that the so-called "native-like" performance should not be a goal for learners. Thus, they should be encouraged to develop an English language personality they are comfortable with.

(4) You be…, I'll be… theater arts: The activities connecting to theater arts include both scripted and unscripted role play, simulations and even pantomime. These opportunities allow learners to experiment with the roles they play through interpretations, expression, and negotiation of meaning in the target language.

(5) Beyond the classroom: As the classroom is nothing but a rehearsal, any of the communicative activities are, in fact, the preparation assisting learners with the real use of English in the world beyond. Thanks to the development of technology, the concept of "global village" is now real. While audio and video programs along with printed materials have already been available, the Internet provides almost infinite range of

information convenient for quick and 24-hour access. It is also an advantageous medium offering the learners the opportunity for synchronous and asynchronous communication with native or non-native English-speaking peers from any countries to develop grammatical, discourse, sociocultural and strategic competence. (pp. 4-6)

All studies have limitations, and the current one is no exception. One major limitation of the study was the lack of classroom observation. As classroom observations grant more details and precise evidences than other sources, its application would not only provide chances for data triangulation, but also lead to a more insightful understanding of the relevant issues. For scholars who are interested in EGP-related theme, the effectiveness of EGP instruction and the role of gender and English-proficiency level may play on EGP learning effectiveness were topics worthy of further inspection.

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臺灣大學之通識英語：學生看法之質量混合分析

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摘要

　　一直以來，英語一直是臺灣大一新生最重要的第二外語之一。它的地位亦因為2005年的教學卓越計畫，而更加地提高。也因為此計畫，在很多大學，英語與其它通識教育相關的課程合併，統稱為「通識英語」。它也成為唯一的必修外國語言。教師及同學們對通識英語課程的看法及態度是混合的。有些人支持與通識英語有關的政策，有些人卻不同意通識英語課程的著重點。然而，雖然有關通識英語課程的相關議題持續的被討論，有關學生對通識英語的意見及更好的實施建議仍然很少，尤其是加入質化的分析。採用質量混合研究方法，結合了量化的問卷調查及質性訪談，於研究中我們發現了性別、年級及英文程度對學生們的看法所產生的不同影響。我們也觀察到量化統計數據及被訪談者質化闡述之間存在著某些一致及差異。儘管如此，學生們的建議指出，為了提升通識英語課程，學校應提供更多的高階英語和發展溝通能力的相關課程。同時應落實教師及學生們教科書的選擇權及給予語言交換的機會。

關鍵詞： 通識英語、大一英文、第二外語