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Adapting Western-Based Management and Business Communication Courses to Global Environments: Expatriate Professor Perspectives

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Objectives: The present study examines an under-researched issue – the transferability and adaptations of Western-based (mainly US) business and management communication courses to the global environments. This paper investigates whether and how the Western expatriate professors adapted their US-delivered modes to accommodate the global communication environments regarding language, culture, and contexts.

Methods: The present study is exploratory research using qualitative methodology. Ten expert Western professors who taught in Hong Kong, Japan, Mainland China, India, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Singapore were invited to participate in the research. The data were gathered through a triangulation method, including objectifying interviewing and the written responses to open-ended questions.

Results: The findings demonstrate that the instructional material and teaching style used in the US or UK could serve as the framework for Asian and Middle Eastern teaching but that adaptations need to be made for language, culture, and context differences in and among Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Notably, the English competency of the students determines the quantity of teaching material that could be presented.

Conclusions: Findings suggest that multifaceted adaptations, including language, culture, and context factors, are critical to the success of transforming US-based business and management courses to the global business communication environment. The paper concludes by identifying five emerging themes in an expanding business communication theory and an internationalized business communication classroom genre. Implications and suggestions for future research are also provided.

Key Words: Business Communication, Intercultural Communication, Teaching Business and Management Communication, Overseas Teaching Adaptation, Expatriate Professors

Introduction

Businesscommunication theory and teaching are evolving from a US focus to an international one (Du-Babcock, 2006, 2014a). During the current globalization, the teaching of business communication has extended to environments where English is used as a second language (see Kachru's 1997 outer circle) and as a foreign language (see Kachru's 1997 expanding circle).

Consequently, business communication as an academic discipline is taught to students in different cultures and geographic areas. The teaching of business communication has been an integral component of business school curricula. Business communication courses have also been developed in other university departments, usually being designated as English for Specific Purposes or writing for the professions.

The language and content of business communication courses may partially reflect the diversity presented in the global communication environment, particularly in recent years. Historically, although implicitly claiming to present universal principles and practices, business communication theory and research still primarily represent the context of and the practices taking place in the social and economic environment of the US. Critics also have argued that behavioral business theory, based on business communication theory and university courses, reflects a Western bias rather than the strict presentation of a universal theory (Adler & Graham, 1989).

With globalization and the emergence of English as the international language or lingua franca, business communication courses are now being taught to English as a second language or English as a foreign language students in other parts of the world. Developing effective business communication courses is critical in Asia due to the rise of more globalized Asian economies in the 21st century (Du-Babcock, 2012).

The cultural differences between the US, Asia, and the Middle East suggest that adaptations are required in business communication courses to align them with the learning needs of particular cultural contexts. US courses can serve as a framework and offer significant content as they reflect universal theory. However, this requires adaptation as they concentrate solely or predominantly on the US communication environment, tending to ignore other world areas. These adaptations should consider that Asia and the Middle East are collectivistic (Hofstede, 2001) and high context cultures (Hall, 1976) and that the external language and communication environment are vastly different from that of the US.

All expert professors who received a Western education and have taught in the US or the UK and subsequently taught in Asia or Middle Eastern countries are a source of first-hand experiences in making adaptations to educate Asian and Middle Eastern students better. In this article, we examine the adaptation of these expatriate professors who have taken visiting or permanent overseas teaching posts either in short-term or long-term appointments.

The focus is threefold. First, we draw on the experience of a panel of ten expatriate professors who have taught in Asia (Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mainland China, and Singapore) and the Middle East (United Arab Republic). In so doing, we first describe the adaptions these professors have made to teach effectively in Asia and Middle Eastern countries. Second, we compare these adaptations from the perspective of country specifics. Third, we go beyond the findings and explore the broader implications of these teaching experiences by explaining how these professors are emerging as opinion leaders and change agents in the movement toward developing a more internationalized business communication classroom genre. We adopt Kachru's (1997) Three Concentric Circles of Englishes for discussion purposes as a framework. Also, the discussion focuses on the country groups of the outer circle and the expanding circle.

Literature Review

This section reviews the adaption literature to ascertain how adaptations affect overseas adjustment in the classroom. We also review the literature concerning language and culture as determining factors for adaptation. Finally, we review foreign or overseas teaching examples and how they have been adapted to fit the international context. The literature review forms the basis for the analysis.

Adaptations and Overseas Assignments

An extensive literature on expatriate adjustment (e.g., Aycan, 1997; Stewart Black, 1988) shows that expatriate adjustment to a host country is a multi-dimensional process (Peltokorpi, 2007, 2008, 2010). This line of research has led to insightful theories on Western-focused expatriate adjustment from a business perspective, yet little research has specifically examined issues of the adjustments made by Western expatriate professors teaching in Asian environments (Du-Babcock, 2000; Suchan, 2007, 2014).

Stewart Black's (1988) empirical study examined three factors of overseas adjustment by American expatriates working in Japan. According to Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, and Stroh (1999), adjusting to a new environment can be challenging. Aycan's (1997) process theory of expatriate adjustment includes psychological adjustment (i.e., maintaining good mental health and psychological well-being) as a critical dimension of expatriate adjustment. Wang and Kanungo (2004) found that expatriates' psychological well-being was associated with their network size, network cultural diversity, and contact frequency.

Culture and Language as Determinants in Overseas Adaptation

The culture received the most attention on factors likely to affect expatriate adjustment, culture received the most attention and

has confirmed that culture influences message encoding and decoding between interlocutors (Du-Babcock, 2019). People with different cultural backgrounds have different frames of reference (Lachman, Nedd, & Hining, 1994) that determine and regulate whether the behavioral patterns would be acceptable. In-depth knowledge of a host-country culture would enable expatriates to avoid many problems resulting from cultural and behavioral differences (Xu & Du-Babcock, 2012). Working under an unfamiliar behavioral and wider cultural distance, expatriates would encounter severe challenges in understanding local behaviors and interpreting signals that local personnel implicitly or explicitly convey. These difficulties would inhibit effective organizational communications and eventually impede the overseas adaptation of expatriates.

Researchers have examined how cultural differences directly influence cross-cultural adjustment (e.g., Selmer, 2006; Selmer & Lauring, 2009; Xu & Du-Babcock, 2012). In Du-Babcock's (2014b) study, one Japanese expatriate commented, "the wider the cultural distance, the more likely the cross-cultural adjustment problems are increased," which may eventually lead to managerial inefficacy. Shenkar (2001) also noted that "closing distance mechanisms" in the expatriate context and lower cultural distance can positively affect expatriate job satisfaction. However, the cultural distance that acts as a marker of social identity makes it challenging for expatriates to develop social ties with host-country local employees; consequently, influence expatriate's adaptation.

Languages traditionally have been either neglected or considered a subordinate part of cultural values in the international management literature (e.g., Du-Babcock & Babcock, 1996, 2000, 2007; Harzing & Feely, 2008; Peltokorpi, 2007; van den Born & Peltokorpi, 2010). Past research has suggested that language may be the source of potential challenges to overseas adaptations (Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2002; Cao, 2008; Du-Babcock, 2000; Peltokorpi, 2007, 2010; Xu & Du-Babcock, 2012).

A large-scale research project asserts that the critical factors often overlooked by interculturalists are the host-country language proficiency and the competence for developing second-language skills (English). Du-Babcock's (2000) study examined the influence of language and cultural competence on expatriates' overseas adjustment in Taiwan. The developed theoretical model shows the relationship between language competence and the expatriate adjustment process. Xu and Du-Babcock's study (2012) reveals that English-language proficiency affects Chinese expatriates' adjustment to overseas assignments, better relations with local employees, and better coping with stress. Selmer's (2006) study also shows a strong positive relationship between social interaction adjustment, although a

weak relationship between language and work adjustment was found.

Overseas Teaching Experiences as a Framework

Although there have been extensive hands-on practical guidelines on teaching English overseas, it is surprising that relatively few research studies on Western professors teaching overseas, let alone their adaptation to an Asian teaching environment. Three publications record the teaching of business communication by Western professors in Asian and Middle Eastern teaching environments (e.g., Du-Babcock & Babcock, 2000; Suchan, 2007, 2014). Du-Babcock & Babcock's (2000) study was the first attempt to adapt a US-based simulation case to Hong Kong. The study reveals the necessity of adapting Western-based simulation material to the students' language environment and proficiency, culturally derived behaviors, and their understanding of the context of American business.

Studies by Suchan describe his teaching experience in Japan and the Middle East (Suchan, 2007, 2014). Using his Socratic teaching method and experiencing frustration, he found it difficult to draw the undergraduate students into an interactive exchange in the classroom setting. In Japan, in the middle of the semester, the expatriate professor participated in a two-hour drinking party where students actively engaged with him in an interactive conversation exchange. Thinking that he had made a breakthrough, he expected the interactive behavior revealed at the drinking party to continue, but the students reverted to their previous in-class behavior. Suchan's (2014) study examines Arabic culture and language shape regional communication practices, particularly persuasion. The results of his case study indicate that Arabic persuasion strategies differ fundamentally from US and Western strategies. Various forms of repetition, highly metaphoric language usage, and intense emotion characterize Arabic persuasion norms when using Arabic and English.

Methods

The present study is exploratory research using qualitative methodology. The choice of a qualitative method (use of semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire) relates to the absence of empirical research on expatriate adaptation that examines Western professors' adaptation from an education perspective. Without such knowledge, the quantitative method is challenging to apply (Yin, 1994). Semi-structured interviews were considered the most suitable way to collect data as they allowed the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the individual perspectives of those involved (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The empirical basis is founded on a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants comprising ten expert professors who received a Western education and had previously taught in Western countries (e.g., the US and the UK). Convenience sampling was adopted rather than strict theoretical or representative sampling techniques. Despite the nature of convenience sampling, we set criteria for selecting and inviting target respondents. The first criterion is that the expert professors were educated and taught in the US or UK for at least five years. Second, the invited interviewees are professors teaching at the university level. Third, these expert professors have had overseas teaching experience either in the short-term (from one week to one-semester appointments) or in longer-term appointments (from one contract of two to three years to holding permanent tenured positions). Lastly, the expert professors teach business or management communication courses or teach business and management courses but with a business communication component embedded in the course. The research objective and the target of the interviewing guidelines were explained in an invitation email. Ten expert professors eventually accepted the invitation to participate in the project.

Data Collection

Data was collected through one-on-one, face-to-face interviews or answering the 10-question interview guides. The objectifying interview approach (Redding, 1990) was employed in which the interviewer engaged in an interactive dialog with the interviewees. The interviews were recorded and transcribed with the interviewees' consent for data analysis. The qualitative data were collected by recording the interviews to collect a rich, dense, and comprehensive data set, which gives detailed, first-hand, and multi-dimensional qualitative data. The 25,000 words of corpus consist of the transcripts of the face-to-face interviews and written responses to the interview guides. The pseudonym of the participants was used to ensure complete confidentiality.

Results

In this section, we first organize and present the Western professors' first-hand overseas teaching adaptations by a country category defined by Kachru (1997) as the outer and expanding circles. Second, we categorize and analyze multiple perspectives to make generalizations based on identified variables likely to affect their overseas teaching adaptations.

The Outer Circle

India, Hong Kong, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates (UAE) are categorized by Kachru (1997) as part of the outer circle where English is a second language. The English language proficiency of the outer circle country group is generally higher than those of the expanding circle country group (e.g., Japan and China).

India

We present and contrast the experience of two professors, the first teaching an elective course as a visiting professor and the second teaching required courses as a regular member of the teaching faculty. The first example is an experienced Texas-based professor teaching a graduate course where entrepreneurship was the core subject matter. Management communication was a major component and source of course content. The students "spoke fluent English, but a two-sided language adjustment process involved learning to understand Indian and the Texas accents." The experienced professor consciously tried to avoid colloquial expressions and specifically American examples.

Regarding participation, the students actively participated, and the professor could "employ the same techniques as he had previously used in his US teaching." He drew on local examples for illustration and used student experience and field research for illustrative material. The students also worked in teams where English was used in small-group discussions and in-class presentations.

The second example is a female professor who taught business communication to MBA students at a government management institute. She was a regular staff member, so students did not see her differently from other professors. "The students had mixed language proficiency ranging from intermediate to native-like proficiency, with oral competency exceeding writing skills." The student's competency level depended on the medium of instruction before joining the institute. The professor stated, "I never really adapted to teaching in India and found it an aggressive environment." The students would "fight over percentage points in their grades which I found unnecessary, especially considering that they were post-grad students."

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong examples contrast the experience of visiting and permanent professors. In Hong Kong, English is the medium of instruction across the university system (with only three universities being allowed to use two official languages). The English language competency of students varies, ranging from intermediate-level to near native-like, depending on the type of secondary school the students attended. In Hong Kong, students attending Chinese as the medium of instruction secondary schools, English is taught as a subject. In contrast, English is the medium of instruction for students attending English as the

medium of instruction schools. Another peculiar factor affecting Hong Kongers' English proficiency is that a societal norm also restricts the use of English outside the classroom (Du-Babcock, 1999; Du-Babcock & Feng, 2015).

The visiting professor had previously taught overseas for a year in the Netherlands. However, his one-year overseas teaching experience in the Netherlands and his home teaching did not adequately prepare him for teaching in Hong Kong. According to the Professor, "I initially assumed that the language level adjustments would not be necessary, but soon found that my assumption of associating English competency level with Hong Kong being a former British colony is incorrect." The professor further elaborated, "although I came across many Asian students in my US classes, I am used to accommodating the student's language levels, yet the adaptation is far more complex in a second-language environment where students possess a varying degree of the English proficiency." Additionally, cultural adaptation is also crucial. As the visiting professor observed, Hong Kong students "tend to be passive and afraid of losing "face" by saying the wrong thing in class or a public setting.

The second professor has taught various communication courses in Hong Kong for over 20 years. She found that "Hong Kong undergraduate students learning in a second language requires a different approach to teaching." Because of the linguistic differences, she thinks that "specialist vocabulary (professional genre) has to be defined and explained in the Hong Kong context." Likewise, "the theoretical concepts and terms have to be culturally contextualized in Hong Kong so that students can apply their observational examples in addition to the ones provided by the professor."

The second professor noted, "Basic concepts when teaching content courses (e.g., communication, advertising, public relations or creative industries) do not need adaptation as these concepts are universal and are phenomena that exist globally." Equally, "discussions about the impact of the Internet in our lives are part of a universal experience that will be universal connecting up student experiences from all over the world." She further commented that "anything very particular or specific appearing in textbooks or readings (e.g., historical events or people, political events, or cultural norms) might have to be explained to Asian students as their current affairs knowledge is not always extensive."

In terms of teaching material adaptation, the professor stated that in her teaching in the 90s, she had to" adapt all of the examples and rewrite all of the content in the Hong Kong/Asian context to make it more relatable for the students" as "all of the textbooks on communication, advertising, public relations, and media studies were written from a UK or a US perspective." She

also found that the advancement of technology has broadened students' subject content knowledge, particularly "culturally-grounded examples may not work well in her early years of teaching in Hong Kong, but now she found that students could understand the nuances."

UAE

Like Hong Kong, the levels of English competency in UAE vary among undergraduates, depending on whether students attended English medium schools. The UAE example is the adaption experience of two female professors who had previously taught in Europe and the US. According to both professors, the students use English as a lingua franca. However, the level of English competency of the undergraduate students varied and ranged from very good to sometimes relatively weak, depending on whether the student went to a private high school (international schools, with subjects taught in English) or a government school (most subjects taught in Arabic). The English competency of graduate students was uniformly high in oral communication and variable in written communication.

The first example is the professor who has taught corporate communication to undergraduate students for eight years. There are varied language proficiency levels in classes, but "speaking skills are better than writing skills." The students had no business experience in most cases. The teaching environment varies according to class composition and gender, so there is "constant negotiation over many aspects of teaching, not just grades" in male classes. There is a "lack of punctuality and a flexible concept of time." In female-only classes, the professor reported that "adaption was not required." She is much more comfortable teaching Arab women, "most of whom are highly articulate and very motivated to learn."

The second professor had minimal personal contact with Arab culture before moving to teach in the UAE. Her undergraduate students were almost all Emirati nationals. The professor taught two female sections and one male section. The students were business majors and, on average, had minimal work experience. For graduate courses, "male and female students attended mixed classes on the male campus during the evenings." Almost all students were professionals working in communications or public relations.

As commented, "Concepts could be presented as they were in US materials/textbooks, but using more local examples to illustrate these ideas." In terms of adaptation, she observed that by living in the UAE, most students had a very high level of contact with various cultures daily compared to her former students in the US. So, "cultural literacy and the ways to approach different cultures and cultural dimensions could be presented taking this

personal contact with other cultures into account." Nonetheless, out-of-class activities and assignments "were constrained by local culture and family commitments." It was not always possible for all students to engage in certain activities outside the classroom because "some had to be home at a certain time due to younger siblings or family duties." The professor explained, "I usually let student teams (in the higher level undergrad course) organize their projects and subdivide tasks in line with differences in the degree of mobility. So, "some group members without time restrictions would conduct interviews while others with time restrictions would compile and analyze collected data." "Keeping in touch via social media rather than by holding face-to-face meetings was a common practice for the student teams."

Singapore

The Singapore example is an experienced US-based professor who has engaged in various types of MBA programs (e.g., Global MBA Program and Business Executive Education Program) for ten years. The expatriate professor commented, "Local students from Singapore possess very high English proficiency, so language adaptation is unnecessary." However, student profiles of the Global MBA Program range from mostly Singaporeans to very diverse nationalities such as India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, and occasionally Filipino. As for the Executive Education Program, students are all male Indian mid-level to senior-level managers.

With Singapore, a multilingual and multicultural society, the professor commented that "the use of various Englishes" and "the impact of culture on language structure, content development, and delivery" do not require adaptations. Nevertheless, she identified three areas needing adaptations.

1. Slow down speaking and enunciate the words,
2. Frequently use "checking' responses to ensure the concepts were understood correctly, and
3. Be aware of the different persuasive or argumentative communication strategies between Asian and US students.

For culture, "learning unique non-verbal cues is essential." For example, to Americans, "the shaking of the head side-to-side" would be interpreted as "no," but it means "yes" to Indians." Another example is the Thai making eye contact. "Thais tend to look away sooner after making eye contact than students from other cultures." It can be challenging to teach "Thais to visually "bond" with individual audience members and professors/bosses." As the professor commented, "The use of vari-ous Englishes" and "the impact of culture on language structure, content development, and delivery" can be challenging.

Expanding Circle

Japan and Mainland China fall under Kachru's category of the expanding circle, where English is used as a foreign language, and English language proficiency is comparatively lower than those of the outer circle.

Japan

The Japanese example compares the teaching experience of two professors. The first taught semester-long courses on three different occasions, and the second taught an intensive six-week executive course. In Japan, English proficiency is at a level where students need help listening to English for extended periods and cannot engage in sustained interactive English conversation. Although the courses taught by the professor were electives, the self-selected students were likely to be highly motivated and have high English proficiency. On the first day of the class, the professor realized she needed to re-design the courses and adjust her delivery method to suit the student's English proficiency level.

To make adaptations, "the course material was reduced by about 50%, and the lecture and discussion were intermixed, allowing students to maintain their attention and conserve energy." To check students' comprehension, "multiple-choice questions were designed allowing students to guess and helping to frame verbal responses and gradually changed to short-answer questions over the semester." After the questions were posted, the professor would solicit answers from the students by relaying their personal experiences and the areas where they had expertise.

The overall strategy was to empower students to experiment with a new and initially uncomfortable behavioral style and engage in the norms encouraging participation as exists in the ideal American classroom. Students were allowed to use either Japanese or English in small-group discussions. Then, students appointed a spokesperson to present their group discussions to the class in English. This practice "allowed the students to engage in higher level English in the presentations as they could plan the content." With all students required to make class presentations, "practice in English was distributed throughout the class."

The second professor taught a six-week executive management course with classes scheduled on consecutive Saturdays. The class was composed of seven Japanese and 18 non-Japanese students. "Non-Japanese students dominated class participation, and the Japanese students did not respond in periodic attempts

to get them to participate." This lack of participation frustrated the professor, but with the class composition being what it was, she felt she could only spend a little time and energy addressing this issue. With the English competency of students being at varying levels, "the primary adjustment was to slow down delivery with the elimination of American slang," the professor commented.

Mainland China

The mainland China example is an undergraduate four-week intensive intercultural business communication course taught in Beijing for two consecutive summers. The students were highly motivated as they aimed to work for multinational corporations in an English-speaking environment. Assuming that the "English competency level would be equivalent to that in Hong Kong," the professor did not plan to reduce the course content. However, with the first contact, she found that competency levels were lower than expected and required adjustments in teaching material and delivery style. However, to her surprise, students adjusted rapidly, and she could return to the original schedule by the third week. Recognizing that the students devoted much time to their projects in the first year, the professor in the following year eliminated some lecture material and built in a series of small-group consultation sessions to guide the students throughout all phases of completing their projects. This adaptation effectively allowed more interactive interchange with students and further helped them improve their English competency as a side benefit. Assisting students in choosing projects with an appropriate scope and being more focused rather than overly broad was a critical component of this adaptation.

Taken together, in considering Du-Babcock's personal experience in addition to those of the ten expatriate professors teaching in various countries outside of their home country teachings, the adaptations of these expatriate professors conform to Du-Babcock and Babcock's (2000) findings from three perspectives, namely language, culture, and context. In the next section, we highlight the differences in the adaptations and relate them to the theoretical perspective.

Language Adaptation

The language adjustments between the outer circle countries and the expanding circle countries vary widely. English is the stipulated medium of instruction across the higher education curricula in Hong Kong, India, Singapore, and the UAE, but not in Japan and Mainland China. Therefore, expatriate professors teaching in the outer circle countries could assume that students possess adequate English competency to understand the nuances of Western theories and teaching materials. In contrast,

in teaching in the expanding circle countries, professors had to adjust their teaching materials and delivery methods to accommodate their students' comparatively lower English competency levels.

The English competency level of students was the primary determining factor in language adaptation. All expert professors practiced international English and concurrently created localized English to enhance communication efficacy. In the early stages, the accents of professors and students often inhibited communication flow and understanding until an adjustment process eliminated these linguistic roadblocks.

Conscientious professors match their use of English with students' competency level or with what Du-Babcock and Babcock (1996, 2000, 2007) called the language-based communication zone width. According to Zone's theoretical models, the language adaptations fell into three categories: in classes where students had full language competency, where students had varying or lower language competency, and where students had limited language competency, and therefore link-pin channels of communication were required.

In an environment where the students possess a Zone 3 high language competency level, there is no need for language adaptations to lower the language level. However, expatriate professors still need to make cultural and context adaptions. Countries such as Singapore, India, and UAE fit in Zone 3, where students possess high levels of English proficiency. In Zone 2, students possess varying levels of language competency, so the expatriate professors must consciously make language adaptations. Hong Kong fits at the top of Zone 2, Mainland China fits the medium tier, and Japan falls under the lower tier of Zone 2. In Zone 1, students possess limited English language competency, so the expatriate professors may need to communicate through a link-pin or intermediary when explaining complex concepts. To be effective, conscientious expatriate professors must constantly diagnose students' language levels and make necessary adjustments.

Cultural Adaptation

Cultural distance dictates how expatriate professors must adapt their teaching from a cultural perspective. Specific cultural adaptations respond to customs and cultural practices. Specific cultural adaptations can be crucial in responding to customs and cultural practices. For instance, in teaching in UAE, different teaching strategies were required in female-only, male-only, and mixed-gender classes. Arab and Indian male students sometimes engaged in aggressive grade bargaining (Suchan, 2014). In countries where face behavior is essential, such as Japan, students tend not to reveal verbal or non-verbal feedback

when encountering difficulties. The Chinese also shared this face behavior. Therefore, Chinese students often smile when embarrassed or not understanding the discussions.

Providing feedback to the students can be very challenging, as the expatriate professors may not be able to grasp this subtlety. In the US, it is permissible to confront students about concepts and factual information in a supportive, interactive environment. Students may welcome criticism of their writing drafts in collective cultural societies (e.g., Japan and China). However, this criticism was only made individually and privately not to shame the student in front of the whole class. In Asian and Mid-Eastern environments, expatriate professors adopted an indirect confrontation style in that the feedback had to be structured so as not to threaten the personal face of the students.

Context Adaptation

All expatriate professors stressed the importance of making context adaptations by localizing their materials. Generally speaking, these adaptations were guided by excluding all and widely known international companies or geographical locations as examples and insertion of local examples as replacements. The international knowledge levels of the students moderated this general approach. As noted by the Texas-based expatriate professor, "If students had high international awareness, a mix of international and local examples added a desirable global flavor to the class."

Discussion

In this section, we reflect on the broader implications of the findings and place the study's findings in a period of flux, change, and expansion of business communication practice and lagging business communication theory in an increasingly global environment. In business communication practice, there is concurrent but uneven business communication theory expansion and the development of international English for the business communication genre. In this process, expatriate professors can assume the role of change agents in shaping the development of internationalized business communication theories and classroom genres. This emerging business communication genre moves from a US-focused to an internationalized business communication classroom genre, given the shift and the projection of an even more significant movement of business activities toward Asia.

Expatriate professors in the panel recognized the need for adaptation. As a result, they adjusted content and language levels for their overseas student audiences. They also adapted their de-

livery style. The collective experience of these professors is guiding the future business communication genre and the education of such genre. This broadened genre reflects a movement from being influenced by a single language of native-English speakers to a more complex environment, including the influence of L1 and L2, with multiple cultures and in multiple contexts.

Internationalized Business Communication Theory and Classroom Genre

The collective activities of the expatriate professors are creating the facilitating conditions for an expanded and more elaborated business communication theory and an internationalized business communication classroom genre. The five primary themes that outline the emergence of international business communication theory and practice are discussed next.

Practice Driven Theory Development

The essence of examples has revealed that expatriate professors have kept the theoretical part of their lectures intact while substituting local examples to illustrate Western-based theories. This localized process has created a dynamic whereby students could better understand and be more closely related to the theory presented. This process also demonstrates the universality of the fundamental parts of business communication theory. While expatriate professors are teaching working students, they will likely be exposed to the local business and professional genres and communication practices in classes or consulting activities. This exposure disclosed the gap in business communication practices and theory development in international contexts.

International General Language

Expatriate professors were put in a position where they had to adjust their general language in constructing messages as senders and learn to understand students who were speaking different Englishes as receivers. In sending messages, professors chose words carefully and eliminated US colloquial, idiomatic, and slang expressions as a conscious and proactive language strategy. As receivers, the inability of professors to understand local colloquial expressions and slang created an initial communication gap. However, local slang and colloquial expressions are a natural component of communication behavior, especially for young non-working students. "Students tended not to but sometimes introduced slang and colloquial expressions in their speech, especially in out-of-class discussions," observed the Texas-based professor. With students continuing to use colloquial expressions over time, professors came to understand these local expressions. Recognizing that slang and colloquial expres-

sions are integral to the oral genre, professors can selectively introduce localized expressions to enhance communication effectiveness.

Communication Efficacy

Two areas of the expatriate professors' experience lead to a discussion of the criteria for communication effectiveness. First, expatriate professors interacted with students who had valuable ideas but language deficiencies constrained in expressing ideas fully. Students often present messages filled with grammatical errors and improper forms that potentially distract from being understood or properly appreciated. In this connection, the professors had to sort through poorly expressed or written messages to determine what contained solid ideas before inducing feedback to students. In providing feedback, the professors faced the challenge of sufficiently acknowledging the ideas while deciding whether to point out grammatical errors or improper forms. Second, the professors face the dilemma of slowing down their delivery pace to accommodate lower-level proficient students while trying not to reduce subject content.

In doing so, expatriate professors may deviate from a norm that emphasizes correct and proper form when teaching in English as a second or foreign language environment. As a teaching practice, professors gave feedback on the content merits, not on how well the information was presented. Grammatical errors were acceptable as a function of second-language writing, and the feedback given to students focused on subject content and idea development.

As prospective change agents in a change process, the professors represent a significant departure from prior theories where proper form and grammatical correctness were deemed essential in business writing. Professors will encounter the difference between knowledge and the ability to express knowledge. In practice, allowance and tolerance will have to be made for differing competency levels in a non-native English-speaking environment.

Deliberate Diagnosis and Continuous Adaptations

The expatriate professors emphasized the need for flexibility in adjusting to the students' backgrounds and competency levels. To do so, expatriate professors, in the discussion parts of their courses, intuitively conducted diagnosis and adaptation when interacting with students continuously. Although audience analysis and profiling are emphasized as the first step in message construction in business communication textbooks (e.g., Guffey, Du-Babcock, & Loewy, 2016), the theory on diagnosis and adaptation is undeveloped. So, expatriate professors could draw on the established general approach but had to work out

the implementation details independently.

Generally, expatriate professors should pay attention to face-giving- and-saving behavior as Asian and Middle Eastern students come from collectivistic and high-context cultural societies. The expatriate professors serve as change agents, and their overseas teaching experiences guide the further elaboration of business communication theory in international contexts. This theory expansion is particularly applicable in developing an interactive and participative business communication classroom.

Language Competency-Based Sub-Genres

The language adaptations of expatriate professors fell into three categories: in classes where students had full language competency, where students had varying or lower language competency, and where students had limited language competency, and therefore link-pin communication channels were required. The language adjustment patterns can be fitted into and explained by the language-based communication zones model (Du-Babcock & Babcock, 1996, 2000, 2007).

The Zone's model provides a framework for theory development in that Zone 1 communication develops when students do not possess adequate language communicative competence in expatriate professors' languages. In the Zone 2 communication environment, students possess partial to full language competency. In Zone 3, students share full language competency as expatriate professors.

The language-based communication zones model provides a theoretical foundation for developing sub-genres fitting the global communication environment. As for practice, the teaching experience of expatriate professors leads to the development of theory expansion and different communication genres based on student levels of language competence. In all, business communication should be seen as a universal or global product but taught in line with local practices and environmental factors.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have described the adaptations made by Western expert professors as they delivered courses in Asia and the Middle East based on their home teaching experience and reflecting their Western (primarily US) business communication theory and practice. Using the qualitative research method, we gathered data from ten expert professors who have taught in Hong Kong, Japan, Mainland China, India, UAE, and Singapore. Drawing on this data set, we have described adaptions made by individual professors in a global environment categorized by Kachru as an outer circle or expanding circle. We

provided specific examples and analyzed the language, cultural, and context adaptions. We paid particular attention to cultural adaptations, where the professors uniformly used a highly participative teaching approach that required students' cultural adaptation to succeed.

In conclusion, we have identified five themes developing in an expanding business communication theory and an internationalized business communication classroom genre. These expatriate professors act as change agents in creating the expanded business communication theory and the internationalized business communication classroom genre. All expatriate professors reckoned that adaptations must be continually made to fit into the changing global and multidisciplinary communication environment to enhance their overseas teaching experience.

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