

海外アカデミック・ディスカッション	
A Report on the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress and A Research on Attitude toward Plagiarism in Chinese Universities	
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Sponsored by the Support Program for Improving Graduate School Education – “Developing International Communication Skills in Japanese Culture Studies”, I was given the chance of participating in the Oversea Academic Discussion project. I took part in and presented at the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress and conducted a survey on Chinese students’ attitude toward plagiarism in English writing.

1. The 36th International Systemic Functional Congress

International Systemic Functional Congress is a major Systemic conference in the field of English linguistics. It is held by the International Systemic Functional Linguistics Association and is hosted every year in different counties since the Seventies. The theme of the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress is “Challenges to Systemic Functional Linguistics: Theory and practice”. It is a big forum for English educators, researchers and students from all over the world to express and share their studies and ideas. As the first edition of the paper I had just finished (“Meaning Represented in English News Media: A Linguistic Analysis of Views on China concerning the Issue of North Korea’s Nuclear Development Program”) exactly falls into the category of Systemic Functional grammar, I submitted the abstract to the conference and fortunately it was accepted. I thought it was a good chance to share my study with other researchers and get feedback, which could shed light on my further study as well as help me revise

and improve the paper. The purpose of attending this congress was not only to express myself but also to learn from others’ studies and experiences in order to deepen my knowledge in the filed of Linguistics and English education.

My presentation made in this conference is based on the previously mentioned paper, which makes a linguistic analysis of three news reports on the issue of North Korea’s nuclear development program. The primary objective is to show how China, Japan, North Korea and the US as social actors are represented in the English news media.

This study shows how Transitivity choices can be used to represent a social actor by coding it as a specific type of Participant and by connecting it with different kinds of social activities. This study also shows how different linguistic strategies work together simultaneously to construe a coherent discursive reality with regard to the political image of different countries.

Japanese media are also cited and introduced in my data because Japan is considered as an important participant in the North Korea’s nuclear development issue. It is thus possible to study Japanese media and their expression of political opinions, which reflect Japan’s political stance and the unique Japanese culture. It is interesting to see how Japan’s voice, which roots in its culture and politics is communicated to the world.

By presenting this paper at the congress, I got valuable feedbacks and was able to hear other researchers' opinions and advice. These will be very important for my next revision of the paper. The revised paper, which reflects the results of this academic discussion program, will be finished by the end of September. It is scheduled to be published on 「英語圏研究」(お茶の水女子大学大学院英文学会). Also by listening to lectures of famous scholars, presentations of researchers and discussions with other participants, I could deepen my understanding and knowledge in the linguistic field, which will in turn help me do my doctoral research in the future.

2. Students' Attitude toward Plagiarism in English Writing in Chinese Universities

My area of research is on Teaching English writing under the overall scenario of English education. One of my interests is the phenomenon of plagiarism in English writing among college students. Especially nowadays in the academic world, most papers on this topic are written by Western scholars, most of whom hold the opinion that the concept of "author's copyright" is a western one, and different cultures have different attitude toward plagiarism. Since my doctoral dissertation is going to talk about plagiarism in English writing, a research on students' attitude toward plagiarism is necessary. Especially when I want to do a comparative study of different language groups / cultures, an overseas academic discussion and research becomes extremely important.

Since most of the relative previous research is about cases of plagiarism in the West, I am interested in how college students in the East look at this problem. As China and Japan are representative of Eastern cultures, my future study is going to focus on students' attitude toward plagiarism in these

two countries.

Took this opportunity of Oversea Academic Discussion, I did a survey concerning plagiarism in English writing in Shenyang University of Technology and had the chance to discuss the plagiarism problem with English teachers in the same university. I was able to conduct the survey and get feedbacks from about 200 college students. This would be valuable data for my future study. I am going to analyse the questionnaires and the results will be used under the third chapter of my dissertation as Data Analysis. Discussion with English teachers also gave me much inspiration. I was able to know the current situation and some detailed cases of plagiarism in English writing classes.

Discussion with the English educators also made it possible for us to have a primary knowledge about the similarities and differences between Chinese college students and Japanese college students. My next plan is to make more study on some cases in Japan. Since people's opinion and ideology are largely influenced by the cultural environments they live, by making a comparison it is also possible for me to further study on the similar and different aspects of Chinese and Japanese students' attitude toward a same problem, thus also compare the resemblance and distinction between Chinese culture and Japanese culture. This study grants a positive prospect to communicate to the world some aspects of Eastern cultures concerning this specific topic and some down-to-earth cases in the front of English education in China and Japan.

I plan to organize and analyse the survey data and finish a short essay (which would be an antecedent report of my dissertation by the end of the coming semester, and try to publish it in 2010 at relative academic journal, such as "The Language Teacher" (Japan Association for Language Teaching).

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【指導教員のコメント】

Yao Xin's trip to Beijing in August 2009 helped advance her doctoral studies in two important ways. The first was her presentation at the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress, in which she presented her paper giving a critical discourse analysis of three news reports on the issue of North Korea's nuclear development program. In this presentation she showed how China, Japan, North Korea and the US as social actors are represented in the English news media. Her participation not only gave her experience in presenting at an international conference, but also gave the other participants an opportunity to hear a

study on a topic of great interest in the East Asian region.

As well as participating in this conference, Yao Xin also collected data for her doctoral dissertation. She is researching attitudes towards plagiarism among Chinese university students. With many Chinese students studying abroad these days, the issue of plagiarism has come to receive widespread attention. However, most studies on plagiarism have been written by Westerners from a Western cultural perspective, and many researchers claim that plagiarism is a Western concept that may be alien to some Asian cultures. Yao Xin's research will investigate this claim by analyzing data from Chinese students. It was thus necessary for her to go to a Chinese university in order to conduct interviews and a questionnaire survey. Her dissertation has the potential to make an original contribution to second language writing acquisition research.

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