

Advanced English Conversations for World Games 2009 Textbook: Design and Evaluation

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In preparation for the World Games 2009 in Kaohsiung City, a conversation textbook was designed by the National Kaohsiung Hospitality College instructors to be used for an English language course related to training student volunteers. This paper reports on the design principles of this conversation textbook, and also investigates a range of discourse features of the dialogues written for it. In the first part of this paper, the goals and objectives of this course and textbook design are explained. Second, the literature in ESP textbook writing is briefly reviewed, and issues related to material authenticity are discussed. In the third part, a detailed analysis of the dialogues in the textbook are reported using the following discourse features: length and turn-taking patterns, lexical density, number of false starts and repetitions, pausing, and the use of hesitation devices. Recommendations and implications for future ESP textbook designers are given as well.

Key words: textbook design; authenticity; discourse features

INTRODUCTION

The 2009 World Games were held in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. In order to

be adequately prepared for the influx of foreign visitors, in 2005 the Kaohsiung City Government launched a series of projects for recruiting volunteers and implementing volunteer training programs. By the end of 2006, 285 qualified volunteers with upper-intermediate English ability were selected as receptionists to serve the VIPs, and had completed a series of basic hospitality English training classes, which included discussion on topics related to airport arrival, hotel check-in and check-out, and sightseeing.

In addition to the above, in 2007 the Kaohsiung City Government sponsored an additional 30-hour advanced English training program for the same group of volunteers. The aims of this program were two-fold: first, it was undertaken so as to facilitate further bonding and cooperation among the volunteers; second, it was hoped that the volunteers' knowledge of Taiwan, Kaohsiung and the World Games would be enhanced, and that they would be able to express said knowledge in English. Hence, to facilitate the attainment of these goals, a textbook, *Advanced English Conversations for World Games 2009*, was designed.

In this color-printed textbook, which included photos and graphics as well, there were seven units. The topics for the seven units are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Topics for the Advanced English Conversations for World Games 2009

Unit 1	Taiwanese History, Culture, and Religion
Unit 2	Taiwan Industry & Products
Unit 3	History and Culture of Kaohsiung City
Unit 4	Industry and Commerce in Kaohsiung City
Unit 5	Life Styles in Kaohsiung
Unit 6	Indoor Sports
Unit 7	Outdoor Sports

In each unit, there were seven sections that were organized in the same order:

- (I) Warm-up: various activities with pictures or open-ended questions
- (II) Dialogues: 2-3 dialogues with Chinese translation vocabulary lists and

comprehension questions

- (III) Language Practice: exercises for vocabulary practice or grammar drills
- (IV) Listening Exercise: 1-2 listening scripts with various elicited responses, including True/False questions, matching, or note taking
- (V) Speaking Exercise: different speaking activities related to the topic of the unit
- (VI) Discussion Questions: guided questions for in-depth discussions
- (VII) Internet Resources: Internet websites were provided for further information

In addition to the textbook, a teacher handbook was also prepared, which included answer keys for the exercises and listening scripts for the dialogues and listening exercises.

As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out, materials writing and materials evaluation are complementary activities: materials writers stand to learn a great deal from engaging in such evaluation, especially when it is self-evaluation. This is particularly relevant in this context, as the authors of this study are at the same time two of the writers of the World Games volunteer training textbook. It is our hope that evaluating our own textbook will help to make us, and the authors of these kinds of materials, more aware of what to pay attention to in materials writing. The conversation features investigated in this study are largely based on Gilmore's (2004) analysis of discourse features found in the dialogues of ELT conversation textbooks. In the following sections, a literature review, methodology, analysis results and discussions are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Materials and textbooks are important resources for teachers and students in the facilitation of language learning. They are the foundation of instruction and the major source of information for teachers and students. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest, for most teachers, textbooks provide the foundation for

the content of lessons, the balance of the skills taught, as well as the kinds of language practice the students engage in during class activities. For language learners, the textbook becomes the major source of language input.

The teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) presents challenges that warrant special attention. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, pp. 4-5) describe some specific characteristics of ESP which differentiate it from General English (GE), referring to the teaching methodology as well as the linguistic components. In ESP teaching, the language methodology and activities are subservient to the needs of the discipline being taught. Both the methodology and activities used in the ESP classroom, therefore, are different from those of GE. In addition, ESP differs from GE in terms of lexis, register, discourse and genre (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Swales, 1990).

The communicative approach to language teaching and its emphasis on sociolinguistic issues has impacted on GE and ESP in different ways. The communicative approach has led to a greater influence of interaction in the GE classes by focusing on social and functional purposes of language in everyday situations. In contrast, the influence of the communicative movement on ESP can be observed in the notion of linguistic communities (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). English language users within a particular field may form their own linguistic community. The language in ESP is more specialized. The materials and textbooks in ESP, therefore, as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) suggest, are expected to help the learners better describe, interpret and explain various situations or conditions. The materials and textbooks should be designed to meet the specific needs of the learners. In addition, the use of teaching methodology and activities should be consistent with the discipline it serves, and should center on the language, skills, discourse and genres of that discipline as well.

As the above comments imply, communicative language learning is in the ascendancy for both GE and ESP, and has been perceived as the ideal approach for a number of years. Though it is often difficult to fully implement, it is nonetheless supported by nearly all professionals in the field,

in word if not in deed. Though there is no single defining feature of communicative language learning per se, authenticity certainly ranks high within it. However, how should authenticity be defined? Is it a feature of text, context or a combination of the two?

One way of approaching these questions is to attempt to delineate the features of authentic language use, especially in terms of oral production. Porter and Roberts (1987) undertake this task in their investigation of the ways in which authentic language usage differs from the language modeled in many traditional ELT texts. For instance, in real-world oral language usage, grammatically-complete sentences are the exception rather than the rule. In addition, turn-taking can be quite messy, and interlocutors' contributions are very often unequal. In terms of context, authentic dialogues contain, on the one hand, a plethora of references to the world-at-large, and, on the other hand, a paucity of cues that are implicit in the speech situation itself. These are the kinds of features that traditional—and not-so-traditional!—ELT textbooks tend to be deficient in, thereby suggesting that they are lacking in authenticity to at least some extent.

Gilmore (2004) focuses primarily on the more quantifiable discourse aspects of dialogues in his study, devoting most of his attention to length, turn-taking patterns, and performance-based maintenance strategies, among others. He also points out how certain ELT textbooks overemphasize formal aspects of language at the expense of conversational flow, resulting in dialogues where speakers do not give appropriate responses to others, or fail to elaborate or expand on a topic of discussion.

However, how is authenticity in course development and textbook design attained? That is, how are the aspects of language use that Gilmore points out supposed to be incorporated into ELT materials? More specifically, is reliance on native speaker intuition sufficient? Wolfson (1989) points out how such intuition very often fails to uncover pertinent aspects of language use, with many native speakers erroneously assuming that they possess a greater level of conscious awareness of their own language use than they actually do. Wolfson points out the need for greater methodological rigor in

these matters, seeing particular value in the use of recorded speech data.

Implementing Wolfson's suggestions into research on language materials development can be undertaken in a number of ways. One such approach is found in Wong (2000), who compares ELT textbook dialogues with real-life conversations (telephone dialogues in her study) found in a language corpus, and analyzes the textbook dialogues into their key components via conversation analysis. The notion of sequence structure/adjacency pairs is especially prominent as a guiding principle in Wong's study, allowing her to better illustrate the ways in which telephone dialogues in ELT textbooks conform—or, actually more often fail to conform—to authentic instances of telephone conversations.

Gilmore (2004) also contrasts ELT textbook conversations with real-world instances, but undertakes it from a different direction. Instead of comparing the textbook dialogues to a corpus, or to features/principles based on a particular discourse-based methodology, he elicits real-world dialogues based on certain stereotypical situations that are often found in textbook dialogues. More specifically, he selects textbook dialogues that center on service-oriented transactions, and he isolates the information-seeking language units—that is, the questions—from each of these dialogues. He then uses these questions to elicit new dialogues via engaging in conversations with real-world participants: these latter sets of dialogues are meant to simulate the encounters being modeled in the original textbook dialogues. These dialogues are recorded and transcribed, and then compared with the textbook dialogues from which the questions were taken in the first place.

The real-world dialogues used as the standard-of-comparison in Wong's study would appear to be more authentic than the elicited dialogues found in Gilmore's study, though Gilmore's research method has the advantage of yielding texts which are more obviously comparable. Nonetheless, both approaches share the underlying assumption that authenticity is of paramount importance in textbook dialogue design.

However, is this assumption shared by most ELT teachers and researchers? Widdowson (1998) puts forward a convincing case for tolerating, and even

encouraging, a certain amount of artificiality in ELT texts, on the grounds that unadulterated authenticity is not an appropriate target for pedagogical materials. More specifically, real-world instances of language use are necessarily bound up with contextual cues and environmental factors in a manner that militates against their unqualified use in the language classroom. However, instead of being discouraged by this fact, language teachers can strive to integrate pragmatically-meaningful use into language forms in such a way as to be made more easily apprehended by language learners.

Gilmore (2004) is aware of the observations that Widdowson makes regarding language use and learning, and the difficulties in bringing authenticity to bear on the language learning task. Still, Gilmore posits that higher-proficiency language learners should be given exposure to the features of real-world conversation that are seldom found in textbooks, and subsequently be taught the strategies that facilitate fluent language use.

The authors of the *Advanced English Conversations for 2009 World Games* set out to produce a series of dialogues that were accessible to students, and at the same time contained instances of authentic language forms and usage. Looking at the variety of issues regarding authenticity in language raised above makes it clear that the sought-after authenticity was most likely not achieved, and yet at the same time it serves as a spur to further reflection and investigation. The following analysis is an attempt to better understand the degree to which the textbook dialogues could be said to be “authentic,” or at least contain features consistent with authentic conversation.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, six dialogues were taken from the *Advanced English Conversations for 2009 World Games*. In order to insure that a variety of content areas would be represented in the data, the dialogues were taken from different thematic units. As a result, there are dialogues covering a diverse

range of topics, including commerce, history, and sports, among others.

The focus throughout the analysis is on the discourse features of the dialogues, with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative perspective provided a standard of comparison with the findings from other studies, particularly those of Gilmore (2004). However, it was also felt that the methodology of the study benefitted by being augmented with a qualitative approach. Since the researchers were also co-authors of the textbook, their subjective perspectives could serve as a counterweight to the more objective measures taken in the quantitative section.

For the quantitative portion, the following discourse features were calculated:

- (1) Number of turns per speaker
- (2) Length of utterance, in number of words
- (3) Lexical density
- (4) Number of performance markers, including performance error markers, turn-taking switches, back-channeling and hesitation devices

In addition, those dialogues which are similar to the types of service-oriented exchanges that Gilmore (2004) treats in his study were compared to the data from Gilmore's authentic dialogues for purposes of comparison.

For the qualitative portion, features related to the effects of speakers' roles on turn-taking and the "feel" (or lack thereof) of authenticity in the speakers' interactions were highlighted and commented upon. In particular, a closer look was taken of the speakers' relationship with each other, and whether the discourse, in terms of content and more-formal features, tended to clarify or obscure this relationship.

RESULTS

Six dialogues—one from each of six different units—were selected for

analyses.

- (1) Unit 1: Taiwanese History, Culture and Religion. Dialogue C (p. 6)
- (2) Unit 2: Taiwan Industry & Products. Dialogue A (pp. 12-13)
- (3) Unit 3: History and Culture of Kaohsiung City. Dialogue A (p. 20)
- (4) Unit 4: Industry and Commerce in Kaohsiung City. Dialogue A (p. 26)
- (5) Unit 6: Indoor Sports. Dialogue A (p. 39)
- (6) Unit 7: Outdoor Sports. Dialogue C (pp. 50-51)

Quantitative Portion

The results of the discourse feature analyses are listed in Table 2. The figures include total number of words, turns and words per turn. In addition, there are data for lexical density provided as well.

TABLE 2
Frequency of Target Discourse Features in Selected Dialogues

	Total	Length		Lexical Density	
		Male/ "Requester"	Female / "Info- giver"	(100 x L/T)	hard words
Unit 1.C	367 words 14 turns 26.2 words/turn	133 words 36.2% 7 turns 19 words/turn	234 words 63.8% 7 turns 33.4 words/turn	43.8%	4
Unit 2.A	373 words 17 turns 21.9 words/turn	183 words 49.1% 9 turns 20.3 words/turn	190 words 50.9% 8 turns 23.8 words/turn	45.3%	2
Unit 3.A	292 words 14 turns 20.9 words/turn	82 words 28.1% 7 turns 11.7 words/turn	210 words 71.9% 7 turns 30 words/turn	44.5%	1
Unit 4.A	349 words 13 turns 26.8 words/turn	98 words 28.1% 7 turns 14 words/turn	251 words 71.9% 6 turns 41.8 words/turn	50.7%	1
Unit	355 words	169 words	186 words	47.6%	0

6.A	18 turns 19.7 words/turn	47.6% 9 turns 18.8 words/turn	52.3% 9 turns 20.7 words/turn		
Unit	253 words	125 words	128 words	44.6%	0
7.C	17 turns 14.9 words/turn	49.4% 8 turns 15.6 words/turn	50.6% 9 turns 14.2 words/turn		

As for most of the other features of authentic discourse used in Gilmore's (2004) analysis—namely, performance error markers (false starts/repetitions), turn-taking switches and back-channeling—these were completely absent from all of the dialogues. There was only one hesitation device (“Hmm”) found in the Unit 3.A dialogue: comments regarding the absence of these features will constitute the majority of the “discussions” section at the end of the paper.

The dialogues which are most similar to the ones used in Gilmore's (2004) study are from Unit 1.C and Unit 2.A: in these dialogues, there is a “service encounter” of sorts, though it is not of the stranger-stranger type which is found in Gilmore's study. There is, however, as in Gilmore's study a person in the role of “requester,” with the other person taking on the role of “information-giver.” For these two dialogues, the “info-giver” speaks twice as much as the “requester”—a figure consistent with the data from Gilmore's elicited authentic conversations. The average length of each turn, however, is not consistent with Gilmore's, though the fact that the ones in the World Games textbook are between acquaintances rather than between strangers, as well as the complex nature of the topics treated in the textbook, may necessitate (or at least justify) longer turn-takings for each speaker.

As for lexical density, this turned out to be not so straightforward to compute. Dividing the lexicon into lexical and grammatical items, as Gilmore (2004) states, seems like it should be fairly unambiguous, and for some types of words this is the case. For instance, nouns, verbs and adjectives are lexical items whereas articles, pronouns and prepositions are grammatical words. However, what about other classes of words, such as adverbs? Some are fairly grammatical (e.g. “often,” “very”), while others are more lexical (e.g.

“unfortunately,” “extremely”). Is copular “be” a lexical item, or a grammatical one? If the point of computing a lexical density index is to estimate the difficulty level or cognitive load of a text, it would seem that “be,” or even very common, relatively-semantically-light concepts like “go” (as in “go shopping,” where the focus is on “shopping”) “big,” or “way” (as in “by the way,” which is a kind of lexical chunk that has a discourse function rather than having semantic content per se) are problematic. Unfortunately, Gilmore does not really offer any suggestions or examples about his classification, and so we counted, as best as we could, based on what we felt made sense to us as language teaching professionals.

Keeping the above in mind, we found lexical density rates that were fairly consistent with those in Gilmore’s authentic dialogues, and in most cases the dialogues in our book had rates even slightly lower. In addition, we also looked for the number of words in each of the dialogues that could be considered relatively infrequent in typical speech, especially those that could be construed as sounding unnatural or overly erudite if used in conversation. We did not find a great number of these: the unit with the highest number of these in fact only contained four such words, and two of the dialogues had none at all.

Qualitative Portion

Each unit of the textbook provides an introduction to a different cultural topic or professional field. The hope was that the learners would be able to master the content, and to use the vocabulary and various structural patterns to improve their overall ability to communicate in English for certain topics. Some special terms or content were introduced and explained in the dialogues, sometimes using difficult language. There were plenty of exercises, so that learners were forced to be active in their use of language, although in retrospect it is felt that some of the exercises were too mechanical. However, since the focus of the literature review and quantitative analysis were on the dialogues and their discourse features, the following comments will remain

consistent with this focus as well.

The relationships of the requester and info-givers are not very clear in some of the dialogues. For example, the person in the “requester” / “less-knowledgeable” role (always a male here) is sometimes a requester, such as in Unit 1.C (“I have some questions about religious beliefs...”) and in Unit 3.A (“One of my friends is coming...Where should I take him?”). However, in two other dialogues—Unit 2.A and Unit 4.A—the “less-knowledgeable” person is not requesting per se, but is given information about a number of things in the midst of the dialogue. This could well be taken to mean that the length of the turn-taking could be more equal between the two speakers—and they are basically equal for Unit 2.A. Unit 4.A, however, is more consistent with the “requester / info-giver” figures, despite the fact that it is not a true “requester / info-giver” scenario.

Furthermore, the last two dialogues—Unit 6.A and Unit 7.C—depict situations where the speakers are both knowledgeable about some things, and ignorant about others. That is to say, there is no clearly-identifiable “requester” or “info-giver” here. As a result, both speakers have a chance to give and get information in the course of these conversations. As it turns out, in both of these dialogues the speakers’ turn-taking are roughly equal: there is no one who dominates the conversation. Although it is not necessarily the case that dialogues among “equals” (speakers with an equal amount of information to give) will result in 50-50 turn-taking, it is at least a possibility. This is not to say that it is a bad idea to have dialogues where the “requester” / “info-giver” roles are ambiguous or co-mingled, but it is an observation on role heterogeneity that bears pointing out.

Nor is it the case that speakers in a “requesting” capacity simply ask questions. For example, in Unit 1.C the requester makes evaluative comments, such as “Taoist and Buddhist gods and goddesses are worshipped in the same temple? Wow! You wouldn’t find that kind of mixing of different religions in the West!” In addition, it bears pointing out that the requester in this situation is not totally ignorant about the topic—he tries to bring in his background (albeit “hearsay” based) knowledge into the dialogue as well,

when he says “I’ve heard that there are some Christians here, but that most people are Buddhists, or even that they worship their ancestors. Is any of this true?” As the speakers are acquaintances, having this kind of back-and-forth between the speakers seems to us consistent with authentic interaction.

However, there are other places where attempts at authenticity do not work out quite so well. For instance, the beginning of Unit 4.A gives the impression that the speakers may be good friends on familiar terms rather than mere acquaintances: certainly comments about “trying to reach you for most of the evening,” as well as a critical “You went [there] again?” remark give this impression. However, subsequent remarks seem to undermine this initial impression. By the time we get to “I should visit a night market with you sometime,” and work our way through the tour-guide-like tone of much of the dialogue, it seems that these speakers are not on such familiar terms after all.

This dialogue shows the “dangers” of grafting on features of familiarity; instead, such expressions need to be used more consistently to insure a good fit. Wong (2000) gives an excellent example of a telephone dialogue in an ESL textbook where the speakers do not seem to recognize each other by voice—thereby signaling unfamiliarity—but then go on to engage in fairly casual chit-chat. This would suggest that textbook dialogue writers should have a clear conception of the relationship between the speakers in the dialogue, and what kinds of expression would sound appropriate for them to use given the nature of their relationship. This deserves at least as much attention as the actual information exchange that takes place—if authenticity is a goal, that is.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Gilmore’s analysis of conversations presupposes that textbook dialogues should have all of the features of authentic dialogues, including performance error related phenomena (false starts and repetitions) and various features of

turn-switching and floor maintenance. However, it could also be argued that such things as performance errors are the result of not having much planning time, whereas textbook dialogues are most definitely planned discourse. Seen from this perspective, to insert “performance errors” into a pre-written dialogue could be seen as contrived or inauthentic. That is, it may not be necessary to “plant” all of these authentic dialogue markers into the dialogues, especially the ones that are printed in the book and are used for students to model their own production on.

However, incorporating these features into the listening comprehension section of each unit is a more desirable move, as students should be exposed to them. Hearing native and proficient non-native speakers making these kinds of “performance errors” may be a boost for the student, especially if most of their exposure to proficient speakers’ use of English is based only on well-scripted contexts. We recommend that the listening comprehension speech models should in fact contain *all* of the following features: false starts and repetitions (performance errors), latching and even possibly terminal overlapping (turn-switching), pausing and hesitation devices (floor maintenance), and back-channeling as well (to show the listener’s “involvement” / interest). In order to make the occurrence of such things more “natural,” the speakers who are recording the dialogues for the listening comprehension section could be told what the topic is, and be given some key facts/details, but they should *not* be given a script to read from. This would mean that the dialogues would be more fragmentary in parts—in short, they would very likely sound more *authentic*.

However, this is not necessarily an ideal way of arranging the dialogues in the parts of the textbook intended for modeling speaking practice. For instance, we do not recommend that performance errors be added to the dialogues that are to be practiced by students, on the grounds that doing so seems contrived. If such errors are present in the listening comprehension dialogues, and if their presence is pointed out to students, that would be a sufficient way of alerting students to what they are. For a similar reason, we also do not recommend telling students to talk at the same time as a way of

modeling terminal overlap. Again, we believe that having it present in the listening comprehension section, and pointing it out to students, is sufficient.

We do see some worth in modeling the use of hesitation devices as a way of filling in pauses so as to help students hold the floor while they are gathering their thoughts; we also see the value of encouraging back-channeling as a way of giving feedback and showing interest. However, instead of printing these in the textbook dialogue (especially back-channeling, which, since it is done by the listener, can be problematic to represent in the dialogue anyway), we recommend the use of follow-up speaking activities. The instructor could point out the value of floor maintenance devices and back-channeling feedback, and ask the students to go back to a dialogue that has just been practiced, with students trying to add these features into the dialogue. Students may not necessarily do it the same way: different students will put hesitation signals in different places. As long as the places are appropriate—that is, tend to occur at what would be natural intonation unit boundaries, where pauses are likely to be found—there can be a number of acceptable answers. This would be one way of making this practice with hesitation devices and back-channeling more meaningful, immediate, and “authentic” than simply having the textbook writers sprinkle in some devices at sporadic locations.

It is our belief that by incorporating these features into either the listening comprehension sections or the follow-up speaking activities, students can be exposed to a range of discourse markers that are found in authentic speech. However, many of these features touch on the formal or cohesive aspects of authenticity; in order to attain the more meaning-based or coherent aspects, it is necessary to put a great deal of thought into the content as well. This is, of course, something that textbook writers should do in any case. More specifically, the previously-mentioned exhortation for dialogue writers to keep the roles of speakers in mind, and not only the semantic content, would constitute a step in the right direction. Whenever possible, modeling sociolinguistically appropriate language should be a high-priority aim.

Finally, it bears pointing out that providing authentic models is only the

first step in the process outlined here. Since it is assumed that these dialogues will most likely be practiced in a classroom setting, we as teachers have the responsibility to make sure that students will practice the forms, and that they will be alerted to the appropriate ways of using the formal features provided. That is to say, authentic texts need to be complemented by authentic context and use—or, if Widdowson (1998) is correct about the unattainable nature of authenticity, then at least we can help foster “authentic-like” tasks and situations. This last suggestion takes us beyond the scope of the topic of this paper, but it nonetheless represents a goal that we would very much like to work toward.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study contains a number of limitations which should be addressed in future research on this topic. First, this study relied on the writers’ own analyses and evaluations; seeking input from independent researchers, on the other hand, may have provided a wider array of perspectives and allowed for a greater degree of qualitative triangulation. In any case, this study does not claim to be exhaustive, but rather was undertaken for the benefit of ESP materials writers and teachers in order to shed light on a number of conversational features that need to be taken into account when designing ESL/EFL textbooks for specific purposes.

Second, the issue of stakeholder perspectives deserves more attention. Given that there is still a relative lack of research in the area of analyzing conversational features in ESP materials, the writers felt that a more circumscribed area of focus was warranted. As such, the analytic approach utilized in this study represents one particular means of helping to bridge the gap between the language modeled in textbooks and the language which figures in real-world usage. However, the writers also concur that for future research, a wider area needs to be taken into consideration. More particularly,

an investigation of the perceptions of all stakeholders—including administrators, teachers, students, and industry personnel—for the purpose of evaluating textbooks in a more systematic manner as suggested by Ansary and Babaii (2002), would provide valuable information for ESP material writers.

Finally, this study set out to investigate several authentic features by adapting Gilmore's (2004) research and both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to provide a more comprehensive approach, certain key sociolinguistic features were left out. Future research could address this by investigating such sociolinguistic research topics as identifying attitudes, the use of agreement, or small talk analyses, in order to establish more clearly whether and how these features play important roles in the evaluation and comprehensibility of English used in service-oriented conversations.

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