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Ã­î’ í’­ng: FROM GLOBALIZATION TO GLOCALIZATION---WHAT THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON CHINESE DOCUMENT DESIGN TELL US ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION (NOTE: the first two Chinese characters are not displayed correctly. Please see the actual document.)

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期待 ing: FROM GLOBALIZATION TO GLOCALIZATION---
WHAT THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON CHINESE DOCUMENT DESIGN
TELL US ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design

by
Xiaoli Li
December 2011

Accepted by:
Dr. Sean Williams, Committee Chair
Dr. Steven Katz
Dr. Xiaobo Hu
Dr. Yanhua Zhang
ABSTRACT

How people from different cultural backgrounds represent themselves and communicate with each other is an intriguing topic in the age of globalization. Using a grounded theory approach, this work investigates how Chinese individuals and companies introduce themselves to a global audience via resumes and annual reports.

To better understand the features of professional communication practices in China today, this work compares and contrasts current resume writing and annual report writing with those in the past, especially before China’s entry into the WTO, in order to understand the changes as well as the cultural contexts and cultural motives of these features. All data were collected by following the grounded theory protocol and were triangulated with interviews and non-technical literature (historical records). Data were analyzed in three layers: contextual, visual, and textual.

This work uncovers the current features of Chinese resume and annual report writing. A cross-genre analysis also reveals that Chinese professional communication practices after China’s entry into the WTO have an imprint of unique incorporation of both traditional Chinese culture and western influences. Results of this work have confirmed and answered the research call by Zhu and Li (2010) to address issues related to such combined influences. The term “glocalization” developed and theorized by Roland Robertson vividly captures the essence of this incorporation which synthesizes the needs of a globalizing post-modern world by appreciating and appropriating professional communication practices both in the U.S. and in the rest of the world. Part of the motivating or justifying force behind international professional communication is
to achieve a better understanding of U.S. professional communication by learning more about non-US professional communication practice---so that U.S. professional communication can be reexamined, refined, and enriched through other professional communication practices. Doing so will retain the vigor and vitality of the field of international professional communication and eventually improve the quality of professional communication practice worldwide.

The pedagogical implication of this work is to enrich the international audience analysis and better prepare students for the global workplace. The research methodology used can be applied to discover professional communication practices in other countries.
DEDICATION

To 我父亲李彦峰 (1942- April 17, 2010).
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my dissertation committee members Dr. Steven Katz, Dr. Xiaobo Hu, Dr. Yanhua Zhang, and especially my advisor Dr. Sean Williams for their patience, tolerance, expertise, and insights. During my many years’ struggle with this work, my committee demonstrated the highest professionalism in supporting me and guiding me in reshaping my research, drafting the manuscript, and revising the dissertation. Without their continuous support and assistance, this project would not have been completed at all.

I would also like to acknowledge my profound appreciation for my family, both in China and in the U.S. (including the Coggins, of course), for their understanding and ceaseless support physically, spiritually, and financially. Although I have not openly expressed my gratitude to you all in person or in writing, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there for me all these years. You are the most essential part of my life! I am so blessed to have you all.

I am indebted to my colleagues in the English Department at Western Carolina University, the Department Head Dr. Brian Gastle in particular, for providing a pleasant working environment for me to grow professionally. This is my first professional home in the United States and holds a special position in my memory.
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This brief section intends to facilitate my readers reading this dissertation with special terms defined and a roadmap provided. A concept can be expressed by using different terms. This section defines a few key terms which I used in my dissertation so that my readers will be able to identify them with me. The second part provides a structure of this dissertation so that it can be followed as a roadmap to explore this project and these will be elaborated in the dissertation.

**Definition of Terms**

期待 ing: The first two symbols you see in my dissertation title are two Chinese characters meaning expect. It is a verb. To emphasize meaning, Chinese language relies more heavily on semantics than syntax. For example, Chinese does not use present continuous tense to show what is going on at a particular time. Younger generations of Chinese who have been studying English language for years become familiar with the different tenses used in English. Like the present continuous tense, they are creating new usages by adding “ing” to a Chinese verb to vividly describe what is happening. For example,上网 ing means *surfing the Internet*. Not only does this language hybridity indicate language is ever-changing, but it also shows the impact English language has on Chinese society in the globalization context.

glocalization: In the age of globalization, we live in a more and more interdependent world. Cultural interactions lead to various degrees of cultural hybridity. The concept of glocalization has involved the simultaneity and the interpenetration of
what are conventionally called the global and local or the universal and particular (in short the coexistence and interpenetration of the global and the local) (Robertson, 1995). Glocalization does not merely involve adaptation in the narrow sense; it also encompasses attempts to create new categories, the construction or the invention of local traditions or forms of particularity (Robertson, 1995, p 29). The concept of glocalization registers the agency of quotidian social actors in critically engaging with and transforming global cultural phenomena in accordance with perceived local cultural needs as well as values and beliefs.

**professional communication:** Faber (2002) believes that “the term professional communication is used as a catchall term for various types of workplace and occupational writing” (p. 307). Richard C. Freed (1992) defined professional communication as “discourse directed to a group, or to an individual operating as a member of the group, with the intent of affecting the group's function, and/or discourse directed from a group, or from an individual operating as a member of the group, with the intent of affecting the group's function” (p. 197-198). In my dissertation, professional communication refers to theory and practice of written, visual, and digital communication used in professional contexts, such as business communication and technical communication.

**international professional communication:** International professional communication (IPC) covers a wide range of topics, including both a research dimension and a teaching dimension. From the perspective of research, I include all efforts made to work (write and design) for international audiences and work and collaborate with people
with diverse language and cultural backgrounds within the United States, in an international setting, or transnationally. In terms of teaching, I include teaching and pedagogy related issues both in and outside the United States. Within the US, at the university program level, I examine the inclusion of any international element in program establishment, program design, curriculum, and faculty and student demographics. At the classroom level, I include activities that are designed to assist ESL students and nonnative speakers of English as well as those that help native speakers to be sensitive to the various information needs of people different from them (nonnative speakers of English and/or English speakers from a different cultural background). Outside the US, I include all teaching endeavors made to introduce professional communication (mostly technical writing) to the rest of the world; any individual teaching, training, workshopping practice of technical writing outside the US by American professional communicators, instructors, and trainers; the exploration of existing technical communication academic programs outside the US; as well as contributions made by non-American communicators to the theory and practice of technical communication from outside the US. Given the scope of this topic, my discussion bears a focus on China.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is composed of seven chapters.

Chapters 1 and 2 are literature review chapters. Chapter 1 introduces professional communication practices in China in the globalization context and the dilemma we face in following the U.S. standard of excellence to assess Chinese practices.
Chapter 2 reviews the development of international professional communication in the U.S.

Chapter 3 elucidates the research methodology of grounded theory. This chapter also justifies why grounded theory is appropriate for this study.

Chapters 4-6 report the findings from a multi-layered analysis of three different genres of professional communication documents and the changes in rhetorical patterns before and after China’s entry into the WTO. Chapter 4 presents how manuals/instructions have been designed before and after 2002 and explains why it was discontinued. Chapter 5 summarizes the general rhetorical patterns of CEO letters of annual reports of U.S.-listed Chinese companies. Chapter 6 explores the resume writing practices in China.

Each of the chapters from 4-6 concludes with a summary of substantive theories in each area. The rationale for selecting these three specific genres and organizing them in such a particular order is to examine how companies are communicating with their global customers about their specific products, how companies are communicating with their existing and potential global investors for further development. To create these communication documents to achieve the mission and goals of a company, companies need highly capable employees. Chapter six offers such a window to view the profiles of candidates who will enter these enterprises.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings about professional communication practices in China across genres and situates the findings in a broader globalization context and the theoretical framework of glocalization.
Chapter 8 concludes with applications and limitations of the research and implications of the research findings for teaching and suggestions for future research. In particular, glocalization and grounded theory are suggested as new approaches to engaging in international professional communication and research methodology.
CHAPTER ONE

CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
John Berger says “seeing comes before words” in his famous book *Ways of Seeing* (1972, p. 1). Here I present four screenshots of the annual reports of Baidu Inc. for the years 2009, 2008, 2007, and 2006. Baidu Inc. is a Chinese-language Internet search provider. It started trading publicly on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange in 2005. After seeing these classical Chinese images of fish and phoenix, I am curious and very anxious to see the image to be used for the coming year’s annual report cover page. If these typical Chinese images are persistently used for a consecutive four years, it is hard to believe it was a haphazard decision. If we follow the globalizing approach, analysis would start with what is missing according to the American document design principles. The image of two beautiful gold fish on the 2008 annual report cover page would probably be considered as a bad choice as this image does not bear a logical association with the company. This image does not make sense to an ordinary American audience who is more familiar with cause-effect relationship as it is “illogical” to associate fish with an Internet search provider, while a Chinese audience might applaud the wise choice
of this image in an annual report. The company here is using this image to visually argue that the company is doing well financially and subtly persuades its audience to remain confident about this company by investing more in the future without using a word. How so? Fish and profit are homonyms in Chinese. Therefore, the implied meaning of “having fish” here means “having profit.” The use of this image not only demonstrates a unique Chinese cultural value—such as modesty—but also exemplifies the unique Chinese communication preference/style—indirect communication.

Globalization has challenged our traditional understanding of our international audiences. After China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, the Chinese are no longer passive consumers. They are also producers of professional communication. They not only produce products, they also produce documentation accompanying the products. Such a dramatic change surely complicates our understanding of the field of international professional communication, and how we pursue research and practice. Our immediate research task is to learn as much as we can about how the rest of the world has been practicing its professional communication. There is no better place to start than examining the primary professional communication documents produced by practitioners in a particular country or region, for example, China. This way we know what they have, what our strengths are, and then probably we can find a niche. We might also see better chances for collaboration. Ideally we need bilingual, bicultural, or polyglot researchers to start the dialogic collaboration.

A review of what scholars have done in international professional communication and professional communication in China reveals what is missing in the
current research and how my research contributes to the body of knowledge in international professional communication research. My research differs from others in a number of ways:

- Unlike most researchers who conducted cross-cultural comparative studies between Chinese and American professional communication practices, this research is a diachronic study of discourses created by Chinese authors. The goals are two-fold: one is to describe the professional communication practices in China and changes in the past twenty years, especially before and after China’s entry into the WTO; the other is to explore the impacts of historical events on both professional communication processes and professional communication products.

- Different from other scholars who focused on one type of discourses, this research situates a discourse in its genre (resume, instructions/manual, annual report) and examines the pattern changes in a span of twenty years. In addition to the study of discourses in each genre, this research also compares these practices across genres.

- Research in Chinese professional communication is a relatively new field and so the grounded theory approach is warranted. To enrich theory generation, a multilayered analysis is embedded to better understand the persuasive strategies employed in these discourses. In short, I study what writing does and how it does it textually, visually, and contextually.
This study puts China’s professional communication into historical context to achieve a better historicized and contextualized understanding of professional communication in China.

This study is committed to understanding discourses from various perspectives, which eventually put a bi-lingual and bicultural researcher at a vantage point to provide accurate and culture-rich explanations instead of defaulting to the commonly perceived cultural denominators or heuristics.

In summary, this study presents qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive research designed to explore the current professional communication practices and communication patterns in China and to understand the influencing/contributing factors of such a practice/practices. In doing so, we will be able to map out the trajectory of professional communication in China. If this is a very informative approach, studies can be conducted in the same spirit in other cultures/countries. This way, we may compare the trajectories and achieve a more vivid and accurate picture of international professional communication research and practice.

The research intends to answer two major questions:

RQ1: What are the features of current Chinese professional communication practices?

RQ2: What accounts for the changes of Chinese professional communication practices?

What are the cultural dimensions, cultural motives, and cultural contexts?

Professional communication in China is a relatively unexplored area, especially when we consider professional communication documents produced by Chinese in English. There
has been a handful of research on the business communication practices in China by Chinese authors and written in Chinese. For example, Andy Kirkpatrick (1991, 1993) researched the writings of Chinese request letters in the area of contrastive rhetoric. Yunxia Zhu (1999) studied the evolution of sales genres in the new social and economic context in mainland China. In her book *Business Communication in China*, Zhu (1999) pointed out that “there has been very little study of Chinese business written genres” (xi). Yuling Pan, Suzanne Wong Scollon and Ron Scollon (2002) offered more practical advice on “how to be a better communicator when engaged in professional work in international settings” (viii) with examples from Mainland China and Hong Kong. To fill the gap, I studied the development of written genres in Chinese professional communication from a diachronic and historical perspective and at the same time relate the study of genre to social and economic changes.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE ON INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

To know the future direction, scholars need to review the journey they have taken, where they have been, where they are right now, and then devise a strategy to take them from “here” to “there.” This chapter completes the historical review.

Since the 1980s, the study of international professional communication in the US has evolved in four stages: the deficiency stage, the emergence stage, the internationalizing stage, and the appreciation stage. A few factors account for the distinctive features of each stage, for example, how is culture conceptualized (dimensional, interactional, static/dynamic, modernist view or post-modernist view, fixed/fluid, process/product)? How do researchers see intercultural communication (a problem and barrier or a negotiation of experiences)? What lenses exist to study international professional communication? What research methods were used? In this section, I trace the development of each stage, highlight the distinctive features of each stage, briefly discuss the major scholarly works and contributions of leading scholars in each stage, and pinpoint the limitations and challenges of each stage. I also discuss in each stage how research and theory is integrated with teaching, seen from the perspectives of curriculum, textbook use, and class activities.

Stage I: The Deficiency Stage—A Linguistic Approach (1980s-1994)

The deficiency stage is characterized by several features: dealing with ESL students and later on intercultural teaching; continued discussion of translation; and a
special Technical Communication forum on international technical communication.

**ESL writing and intercultural teaching**

In the 1980s, there was a surge of the international population on US campuses, especially in engineering and technology. To respond to such a rhetorical situation, several articles and books on how to deal with nonnative speakers of English were published. Interestingly one of the earliest articles was not written by a professional communication researcher or teacher from the U.S.. Instead, in 1983, Yoshiaka Shinoda—a linguistics professor from Japan, published her article “Some Practical Advice on Teaching English Technical Writing to Foreign Students” in the Technical Writing Teacher based on her observations at University of Michigan. A year later, Janet Constantinides wrote “Technical Writing for ESL Students.” In this article, she provided a model technical writing course with special emphasis on the needs of ESL students. She also gave a sequence of technical writing assignments, such as a letter of application, memo, process report, proposal, progress report, and long-form report, with special focus on the rhetorical, syntactical, and grammatical features (1984, p. 137).

Robert Kaplan is often seen as the founder of contrastive rhetoric studies in the US. His seminal article “Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education” (1966) made a stir. In this article, Kaplan argued that teaching reading and composition to non-native students differs from teaching reading and composition to American students. He posited that “cultural differences in the nature of rhetoric supply the key to the difference in teaching approach” (Kaplan, 1966, p.1). Kenneth Rainey (1990) challenged Kaplan’s hypothesis in his article “Teaching Technical Writing to Non-Native Speakers.” He
suggested that first we should help nonnative speakers overcome the cultural-induced mindsets about student-teacher relations and about rhetorical strategies. He then offered instructional principles and pedagogical techniques, such as grading their papers in conference and giving more detailed assignment instructions. Diane Belcher’s (1991) article “Nonnative Writing in a Corporate Training” presented a picture from the industry practice side when more people with different language and cultural backgrounds joined the workforce. She attempted to help overcome these writers’ anxiety over linguistic and rhetorical disadvantages by using contrastive analysis of documents created by experienced and novice native speakers and novice nonnative speakers. In 1991, the second edition of Thomas Huckin and Leslie Olsen’s book *Technical Writing and Professional Communication for Nonnative Speakers of English* was published, which is good evidence that the topic was very timely and had a wide audience.

Built on previous scholarship on how to deal with ESL students, starting from 1992 on, a few scholars such as Beamer, Bosley, Thrush, and Tippens called the field to study intercultural communication. Beamer (1992) focused on improving students’ intercultural communication competence. She believes that the ability to analyze communication behavior within the context of the values is transferable to more than one culture. Bosley (1993) discussed the four cultural characteristics (group or individual emphasis; achievement and responsibility; decision-making strategies; and thinking and communication styles) that influence group behavior. She argued that we should enhance cross-cultural understanding in collaboration, and help them “focus on cultural differences in group emphasis, achievement, decision-making, and communication style”
Thrush (1993) pointed out that “the use of a particular grammar and vocabulary does not necessarily imply a shared value system, a uniform approach to business transaction, or a common pool of knowledge” (p. 273). She believes that cultural specific rhetorical strategies and cultural differences in processing graphics are two main factors that influence the use and effectiveness of documents. She suggested that showing students how cultural differences manifest themselves in text and graphics is undoubtedly a better approach. Tippens (1994) first defined and exemplified problems of ethnocentrism, language barriers, cultural differences and then provided detailed suggestions on how to interculturalize technical and business communications courses with each type of assignments so that we could prepare students for effective productivity and humanity in the new global workplace.

**Discussion of translation in Stage I**

As a practical field, professional communication has been addressing the needs of professional practices, though oftentimes it is behind professional practice, ever since the inception of the field. Similarly, international professional communication is not proactive in providing guidelines or directing business people as to how to conduct business in the international world. Instead, it gives a passive response to the changes of business models and business practice (Beamer & Varner, 2008). For a domestic company with its market limited to the US territory, there isn’t much concern for international users. When the company evolves from a domestic company to an import/export company, there might be a need to consider the international audience; however, that task is more optional, meaning that it depends on the company and how
eager that company is in engaging or expanding its foreign markets. Usually not much
effort was made from the exporter. Instead, the importer took the pain to learn how to
use the imported products. But when a company is moving from an import/export
company to an international or global company, the need to address the new challenges
emerges and that’s when IPC came into play.

Only big international companies (Apple, IBM, Microsoft, Sun Microsystems)
either could afford the resources or were willing to tap the field of translation. The focus
was on the linguistic translatability (more precisely semantic translatability) of the
documentation that comes with a product. Therefore, I call it a linguistic approach.
Usually it was achieved at the reader’s end, not the manufacturer/designer/producer’s end
when the companies that imported products from abroad looked for translators, someone
who might not be familiar with the subject matter at all. The underlying assumption was
that once the reader/user can understand the words in their own language, there shouldn’t
be a problem in effectively using the products. A machine should be able to do it, too,
once it is programmed for that purpose (machine translation software). That’s why there
were quite a few articles on the pros and cons of machine translation. For example,
“Machine Translation in the 1990s” by Muriel Vasconcellos in 1990 reviewed the quality
of MT, people’s attitudes toward MT, and both market trends and development trends.
Besides machine translation, controlled English was another topic in translation.

Seguinot (1994) was the first scholar who wrote on the importance of
translation and technical writing in her article “Technical Writing and Translation:
Changing with the Times.” Seguinot pointed out that translators complain that “badly
written, jargon-ridden texts are open to multiple interpretations” (p. 289). Certainly technical language has to be precise and accurate. However, not all languages share the same text conventions for procedures, and cultures have different propensities for allowing direct forms of address, selecting the abstract or the concrete, or tolerating repetitions. She suggested that the organization of text as well as more obvious issues like the cross-cultural understanding of icons and metaphor need to be addressed.

**Forum on international technical communication**

By 1990, globalization had become a hot topic in business, political science, and sociology. People in the professional communication field also sensed the importance of communicating with a diverse audience. However, designing and writing information for culturally diverse audiences proves a tremendously difficult task because information needs and styles of communication differ from culture to culture. These differing needs and styles must be carefully studied and then applied if we are to fully communicate with our audiences. It was under such a circumstance that the journal of *Technical Communication* started a special forum on international technical communication and Fred Klein was invited as this forum leader from early 1989 to mid 1995. The forum was open to all professional communication practitioners all over the world and welcomed articles that dealt with technical communication and translation (Klein, 1991). Contributors were not limited by the language they could use. The forum offered free translation service for authors who would write in languages other than English. There was a prediction that Japanese technical communicators would contribute a lot because the Japanese economy was booming in the 1980s. Unfortunately, no one actually utilized
the free translation service provided and most contributors in the first two years were from the US. Most articles talked about teaching English in other places outside the US (Ross Willmont in China, Alan and Marianne Brokaw in Estonia, Klein in Argentina) and were more reflection-type papers (Lu and Luo in China and another English teacher from the Netherlands visiting the University of Washington for a semester). None of them had a degree in technical communication. Relying on their limited exposure to technical communication by visiting and studying in the US briefly, they provided an understanding of PC as practiced in the US.

**Limitations and challenges of Stage I**

Literature at this deficiency stage was not only limited in quantity, but also showed deficiency in integrating theory and research with practice. Audience analysis was not a new concept for technical writers; however, only two scholars, Mirshafieie and Subbiah, addressed the issue of language and culture and audience analysis. Subbiah’s (1992) article “Adding a New Dimension to the Teaching of Audience Analysis: Cultural Awareness” differs from the above-mentioned scholars who tried to help non-native speakers in a technical writing class. Subbiah, instead, took a different route by preparing native speakers of English for a global marketplace. Subbiah offered teaching strategies to address cultural influences on thinking, learning, stylistic expectations, as well as cultural influences manifested in written communication, oral communication, and professional situations. Mirshafieie’s (1994) article “Culture as an Element in Teaching Technical Writing” shows how people’s native cultures affect their ability to communicate in English. He suggested that effective teachers should identify areas in
technical communication that are likely to pose problems for non-native students and professionals and then design instruction to solve those problems.

The lack of audience analysis at this stage could be explained because rhetoric was fairly recently (1980s) introduced into composition and technical communication. Karen Schriver (1990) highly praised the wedding of rhetoric and technical writing as it “provides technical writers with a powerful historical and theoretical framework for considering how people construct meaning” (p. 319). It serves as a catalyst for building empirical theories about how people in particular rhetorical contexts read and write. It helps the field to move beyond its simplistic notion that we always write for generic lay readers.

Another problem at this stage was associated with the unsatisfactory translation. The words might have been correctly translated while the sentence structure (syntax), organization, or tone remained “foreign” to readers. Above all, no effort was made to accommodate the cultural diversity. Thus, there was a need for expanding the research.


The publication of Nancy Hoft’s book *International Technical Communication: How to Export Information about High Technology* in 1995 launched a trajectory of scholarship with considerable repercussions in the professional communication field. Books, journal articles, and conference presentations devoted to international professional communication study increased dramatically with the consensus that culture matters. In her book, Hoft cautioned the field to “reengineer technical communication
for international use” (p. 1) because the media we are working in, the tools we write with, and the audience for which we write have changed. She stressed the need to expand audience analysis to multicultural awareness and international audience/user analysis. She considered this new approach an effective approach to IPC because it balances economy (business needs) with cultural understanding (user needs). Borrowed from anthropology and intercultural communication, she proposed the ice-berg model and the international variables (political, economic, social, religious, educational, linguistic, and technological) worksheet to compute all the cultural information to be collected. No doubt her book was a breakthrough in the IPC study with guidance on internationalizing, localizing, or globalizing information products. Bruce Maylath even called this book a “gold mine (1995)”. Other scholars followed her advice by adding the dimension of culture into technical communication study or expanded it from products to managing projects, international teams (Andrews, 1996; Leininger, 1997), making documents translatable from the author’s end (Weiss, 1993, 1995; Maylath, 1995; Spyridakis, Holmback, & Shubert, 1997) and exporting technical communication to other countries in general (Dragga et al. 1998, 1999). The Journal of Business and Technical Communication devoted the whole third issue of volume 11 to “how to address international issues in business and technical communication.” I will discuss how scholars at this stage address the concerns of the previous stage from three aspects: culture awareness, translation, and teaching and international audience analysis.

Culture matters

Jan Ulijn in his book Communicating in Business and Technology (1995) and his
article “Translating the Culture of Technical Documents” echoed what Thomas Warren said earlier in 1992: culture matters. Warren (1992) stressed that the concept of culture beyond the verbal translation level affects the quality of a technical document. Ulijn (1995) reiterated his view that we should look at cultural expectations as they relate to direct and indirect structures. He argued that a cultural rewriting of a business or technical document can avoid misunderstanding and “American businesses facing Europe’s cultural diversity must write good, culturally-focused documentation” (p. 83). He even sketched the image of an “ideal writer” 1 as a native writer of the target language and culture with strong background knowledge of the subject.

Boiarsky (1995) noticed that people write and interpret messages according to their particular culture and she agrees with Subbiah, Thrush, and Bosley that “organization pattern is a function of culture” (p. 247). She argued that understanding the relationship between culture and language has become a requisite for successful business enterprises in the developing global economy. She believed that cultural conventions inform language, often creating differences in the content, organization pattern, presentation of argument, style, and format of business documents. She offered

1 The article by Yi Zhang on “The Best Approach for Chinese into English Translation” has a different view. “In choosing translators, a good guideline to follow would be to use translators whose mother language is the target language. For example, we only use a native French-speaking translator to perform translation from English into French, but never from French into English. The reason behind this is that people are usually more proficient in manipulating their own mother languages.

By managing large projects involving Chinese translation into English in the past two years, it has taught me that in handling this language pair, the ideal candidate is not native English-speakers, but native Chinese-speakers living abroad.” (http://www.wintranslation.com/articles/art04_0001_CHapproach.htm)
strategies on how to prepare students to enter the workplace, such as immersion in a
culture and language, and understanding the cultural conventions.

Translation in Stage II

Simple translation does not equal communication. Translation cannot be treated
like word processing. It is rather processing ideas and concepts. Working with the
context of where and how the information will be used is more important than the
language. If the context and culture are correct, the proper language will follow.

Timothy Weiss championed this concept with three articles addressing
translation. In his 1993 article, “The Gods Must be Crazy,” Weiss pointed out that
“culture, like language, would become “hybridized” as foreign elements are integrated
into it” (p. 206). Translators must know language well enough in order to observe non-
parallel structures and correspondences and they must also have the ability to re-express
ideas in the target language. In addition, translators should have a rhetorical knowledge
of discourse patterns and forms. Weiss (1995) called teachers to train students to meet
the needs of international audience “in a borderless world” by “emphasizing textual
clarity, teaching the differences, and broadening the scope of audience analysis to
encompass diversity in the global workforce” (p. 421). Maylath (1997) concurred with
Weiss and in his article he specified the four elements that we should teach technical
writing students to prepare documents for translation: clarity, terminology management,
space and signpost, and cultural and rhetorical differences.

Continuing the study on the use of controlled English for creating documentation
for nonnative speakers of English, Spyridakis, Holmback, and Shubert (1997) carried out
an empirical study that aimed to examine the translatability of Simplified English as used in maintenance procedures in the airline industry. The study examined the effect the document type (Simplified and non-Simplified) and procedure on the quality and ease of translation for native speakers of Spanish, Chinese, or Japanese. The results revealed that simplified English may be more effectively translated by native Spanish speakers than by Chinese speakers (1997, p. 10). They speculated that such an occurrence might be the greater linguistic similarity of Spanish to English than Chinese to English. Based on their study, they made recommendations about the design of translatability studies in general.

**IPC pedagogy at Stage II**

An increasingly global economy changed how professionals in science and technology communicate. At this stage, we began to see integration of theory and research both with practice and with teaching. In addition to her influential book which has more thorough guidance for industry practice, Hoft also published an article in *Technical Communication* in 1995 on the curriculum of international technical communication. Besides Hoft, Deborah Andrews, Linda Driskill, Jan Spyridakis, Libby Miles, and Jan Corbett contributed greatly to the scholarship on how to internationalize technical communication classrooms from the perspective of textbooks, readings, and classroom practices. Corbett (1996) studied the commonly used approaches to teaching intercultural communication. She rejected the information-acquisition approach because it over-generalizes and stereotypes cultural differences and the case-study approach, and she recommended a different approach---a praxis-based approach. Miles (1997) analyzed how textbooks position students, especially international students as clients, consumers,
and exotics who present barriers to effective communication. To better understand international issues, she suggested reading relevant ESL scholarship for insights.

In 1998, *Technical Communication Quarterly (TCQ)* devoted a whole issue to international communication in the scientific and technical professions. While most articles report on research and practice in this transformed environment for work, three experienced teachers suggested approaches to integrating an international perspective into the technical communication classroom at different programs, at different levels, and with different students. Driskill used Andrews’s book *Technical Communication in the Global Community* in her undergraduate engineering writing class at Rice University to prepare her students to write well in the engineering profession. Spyridakis, instead of adopting a single textbook, used a selection of articles to conduct her technical communication graduate seminar at the University of Washington. Hoft used her own book and a module approach to teach a semester-long course in international technical communication at Michigan Technological University. Andrews (1998) extolled their efforts by contrasting their “integrating” practice with “the superficial mandates to internationalize the curriculum which only reinforces the notion of applying an international coating, like accessorizing a wardrobe or waxing a car” (p. 245).

**Limitations and challenges of Stage II**

Scholarship at this stage did point to a new direction in studying technical communication; however, the cultural analysis approach suffered from a narrow, binary, and ethnocentric vision of culture and focused only on the general cultural factors on communication; it also demonstrated a U.S. cultural bias that reflected a universalist
assumption about what people should do. It perpetuated generalized and stereotyped cultural principles. Such an approach was so prescriptive or even negative that it could not lead to a better solution that could tackle the complexity in intercultural communication. Some questions remained unaddressed and new concerns emerged, too. For instance, which cultures and what cultural factors influence PC, and in what ways and to what extent do cultural factors influence PC and are cultural factors the only determinants of IPC?


By the end of the 20th century, economic globalization intensified, especially in Asia. Cultural analysis faced more and more challenges. Lovitt (1999) called scholars to rethink the role of culture in international professional communication and the reconceptualization of the professional communication discipline in the age of globalization. Although McLuhan’s idea of a global village sounded promising, the chance of a global culture looked slim. Therefore, the dichotomous nature of culture analysis (us vs. them, the West vs. the rest or US vs. international) should give way to a more culture/context specific approach. Lovitt and Goswami’s edited book Exploring the Rhetoric of International Professional Communication attempted to address the shortcomings of the culture analysis model and promoted alternative approaches and perspectives, especially a rhetorical approach that is sensitive to a particular communicative context. Case studies and field reports were common research methods adopted by IPC researchers who paid attention to a specific country like China or culture
as China’s economy had grown enormously. Hoft (1999), Coggin & Coggin (2001), and St Amant (2001) encouraged researchers in the field to consider China. A number of scholars—Dragga, Barnum, Coggin, Ding, Dauterman, and Wiles—followed their call and visited China, explored the status of technical communication practice and teaching in China, and some even taught English in China for different lengths of time. For example, Sam Dragga and 12 North American technical communicators from both industry and academe visited several cities in China and met with teachers of language, science, engineering, and heads of translation companies. Both Dragga (1998) and Tegtmeier and colleagues (1999) reported that the teaching of technical communication in China is “ad hoc and extracurricular” (p. 36) and China is hungry for information and education about technical communication. Barnum (2001) led a delegation of five technical communication faculty members to teach at Jiangsu technical writing institute—a short-term summer program designed to develop an interest in technical writing among college teachers. Coggin and Coggin (2001) taught at Xian International Studies University for two years and offered a refresher course in technical writing to English faculty and graduate students. Ding and Jablonski (2001) spent two weeks at Suzhou University teaching a technical writing seminar. Dauterman (2005) reported her two-week workshop experience in a faculty development project for English instructors in Changchu, China. She addressed how the working environments abroad could pose challenges to our pedagogical practices and our assumptions about teaching and learning. Wiles (2003) visited China twice with the goal of introducing team-based single-sourcing
concepts within Chinese industry and academe because “the team-based focus of single sourcing is compatible with specific Chinese values” (p. 372).

Some other scholars like Chu, Honald, and Wang took a cross-cultural approach. Using an extended case study, Chu (1999) addressed the challenges of designing a Chinese-English bilingual Web site. He analyzed the cultural, linguistic, technological, and political issues that technical communicators faced and the solutions they developed. He argued that “the combined use of chopsticks and a fork is an appropriate and useful metaphor for integrating the Chinese and English portions of a bilingual Web site” (1999, p. 206). Honald (1999) conducted a usability test to learn how Germans and Chinese learn to use a new technology and how culture affects their learning process and learning styles. Honald found that Chinese and Germans used different learning and information-gathering strategies. For example, Chinese learned by imitating while Germans learned by doing and knowing the principles. Honald’s finding that “the Chinese people rely more on informal and oral information, whereas printed user manuals are the main source of information for Germans” (1999, p.196) is informative for designers. Wang (2000) examined a few instructions and the use of graphics in these instructions. She concluded that Chinese document design has a poor text-image integration and the information provided within the documents is too technical (p. 557).

**Limitations and challenges of Stage III**

I praise those individuals who made efforts to visit China, exploring the technical communication status in China, introducing technical writing to Chinese
academe, and teaching technical writing seminars in China. Their field reports and case studies, though based more on impressions than empirical findings, were more acceptable and informative than research using assumptions or projections on how Chinese communicate based on stereotyped cultural heuristics. Due to the discipline’s lack of theory on culture, international professional communication continued to rely on scholarship from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and intercultural communication. Culture at this stage was defined both as dimensional and learnable (Kampf, 1999). Edward Hall’s cultural patterns theory (high-context vs. low context cultures) was often used to explain the directness of writing in the west as opposed to the indirect approach often adopted by non-western writers. Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance vs. uncertainty tolerance) theory had been widely applied to organizational communication and management styles. However, the reliance on the previous scholarship and those anthropological frameworks led IPC scholars to present a static view of a culture based on the features of its national culture. For example, both Dragga’s and Coggins’ articles focus on Confucianism and its impact on Chinese, which is far from the communication practice of people in contemporary Chinese society.

As in the previous stage, IPC scholars did not escape the trap of the difference-based cultural approach. Not only is American culture treated as normative (an ethnocentric view), but also the U.S. model of technical communication is used as the criteria in evaluating the effectiveness of discourses created by other cultures. These researchers use the American technical communication and document design principles,
American writing styles (readability/usability, easy comprehension and conciseness) as the standard of excellence to examine the individual documents. Such an approach is problematic because the original document designers might not be aware of these American design principles and guidelines in the designing process. They may have a different design purpose, design motive, and design philosophy to guide their designs. They may have a different rhetorical approach to understanding the target audience. Or maybe their design is culturally more designer-oriented than user-oriented. Therefore, it is unfair to evaluate the designs of these documents through the lens of American document design by decontextualizing the rhetorical situations.

In general, IPC study at this stage was conducted mostly through the lens of national cultures. Both Perkins (1999) and Weiss (1995) agree that it is good to know the generalizations and stereotypes about cultures, “but finally it is the individual whom we address and that individual abroad will be just as complex and unpredictable as any individual in the US” (Weiss, 1995, p. 422). Therefore, they recommend that we need to address the individual in international contexts, rather than the categorical Chinese audience. However, ITC research in the US had not reached the stage where it can discuss the field at the individual level.

**Stage IV: The Appreciation Stage—A Critical and Dialectical Approach (after 2005)**

Informed by post-modern theories (Appadurai’s cultural dimensions of globalization and Ong’s flexible citizenship) and contemporary intercultural communication theories (interpretive approach, critical approach, dialectical approach to understanding culture and communication), IPC researchers after 2005 began to
reconceptualize culture and study the fluidity of cultural identities of individuals who engage in a communication activity (Hunsinger, 2006). They contextualize a discourse in specific contexts (political, social-economical, historical contexts) in addition to the social-cultural contexts in order to present a dynamic view of a communication activity. In the following, I discuss efforts made by scholars from both the U.S. and outside the U.S., especially China, in introducing new approaches and perspectives and in collaborating across the borders.

**New approaches and the native’s view**

At this stage, I see more research done by bilingual and bicultural scholars. Ethnography, discourse/textual analysis, and cultural usability are the research methods used. For example, Ding (2006) examined how two philosophical principles of Confucianism inspire an indirect style in professional communication in China. He has found that professional communicators in China rhetorically use indirect styles in communication for two pragmatic reasons: to create a bond between individuals at the individual level and to build a harmonious social structure at the societal level. Zhu and St. Amant (2007) used textual analysis to examine how cultural rhetorical factors affect American perceptions of a Chinese-created Web site on traditional Chinese medicine. Sun (2006), through a cultural usability approach, successfully argued that in the localization process designers should pay attention to the users’ social and cultural use of a product and link design to use to address the problems associated with the current localization practice which ignores considering the user’s social-cultural and historical context. Yu (2009) argued for a historicized and contextualized understanding of
technical communication in China. Her research breaks through the current limitations on theoretical frameworks and methodology and goes beyond the contrastive rhetoric lens and the common Chinese cultural denominators to look at the indigenous genre of culinary instructions written in Chinese from 500 BC to present.

In addition to IPC research and practice on the US side, I begin to see perspectives from outside the US. Duan and Gu (2005) explored the development of technical communication in China’s universities based on their experiences teaching technical communication to medical graduate students in China since 2001. The article analyzed the causes of the slow development of technical communication teaching in China. The authors determined that technical communication should not be introduced to China as an independent discipline because: 1) technical communication may be too difficult for college students and may not meet their needs since Chinese college English teaching is still test-oriented; 2) technical communication is unfamiliar to most English instructors. They concluded that it would be better if technical communication skills are integrated into China’s English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Similar challenges can be seen in Dauterman’s 2005 article, too.

A number of studies have been conducted on the evolution of business discourse in relation to social and political changes. Zhang (2006) offered a historical review of the development of gongwen (official-letter writing), yingyongwen (practical writing), and international business genres. He pointed out that these genres were created to meet the social, political, and economic needs of Chinese society. The author
especially alluded to the fact that in traditional official-letter writing, Chinese business discourse is characterized by attentiveness to politeness principles.

To understand business genres in English and Chinese cultures, Zhu (2005) adopted a sociocognitive perspective in viewing genre conventions by combining genre analysis, cross-cultural communication, pragmatics, and contrastive rhetorics. Following her model for cross-cultural genre study, she analyzed three types of business writing (sales letter, sales invitation, fax) collected from two cultures and compared persuasive orientations and rhetorical structures across genres and across cultures. She also proposed a model for genre teaching and learning.

Zhu and Li (2009) recently completed research about Chinese business discourses. Their earlier research (Li, 1990; Zhu, 1999) found that China has a long history of using business or administrative discourses although it has never become a mainstream interest in Chinese discourse studies. Zhu and Li (2009) pointed out that mainland China in particular is catching up swiftly as an important player in the world economy since joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001. The business discourse used paradoxically reflects both Confucian values and the western influence of marketing practice. They concluded that “both diachronic and historical patterns, as well as the influences of western approaches, were found to apply to Chinese business discourses” (Zhu & Li, 2009, p. 351). They argued that “the historical approach is particularly relevant today when Chinese discourse is undergoing dramatic changes, as signaled for example in the emergence of new patterns of interpersonal interactions in business contexts” (p. 351).
Collaboration and research by bi-lingual scholars

Applause should go to Barnum and Li for their collaborative effort in their article “Chinese and American Technical Communication: A Cultural Perspective” in 2006. Any comparative study could fall short if the researchers only have a good understanding of one side of the story. The results could be incomplete and biased. Not only researchers from two different cultures have collaborated, several technical communication programs in the U.S. have considered establishing partner relationship with Chinese universities to offer dual degrees. For example, Southern Polytechnic State University started its partnership with Northeast Normal University in China in 2003 and the first degree was granted in summer 2008.

Lu (2006) reviewed the 40-year development and studies of comparative rhetoric in the US and noted the progress in shifting the study approach from a Eurocentric lens to an engagement with a multicultural rhetorical perspective. In the article “Studying the Chinese Rhetorical Tradition in the Present”, Mao (2007) continued his argument as he made in his 2003 article “Reflective Encounters” that when we study non-western rhetoric tradition and practice, we need to turn to cultural anthropology and focus on the discursive fields so that we may be able to study them “on their own terms” and “in their own contexts” (p 221). His argument was mostly inspired by Robert Oliver’s book Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China in 1971 and works of other colleagues such as Mary Garrett, Xing Lu, Yameng Liu, and Carolyn Matelene (though there was a mismatch between what she claimed to do and what actually she did when she analyzed the English composition of her Chinese students.)
his 2007 article, through a study of the *Analects*, Mao addressed some of the methodological challenges and his research sheds light on our perennial struggle to represent the Other in its own context and on its own terms. He examined three approaches: the general approach as represented by George Kennedy (1998) in his *Comparative Rhetoric* (using the models and concepts in Western rhetoric to test the universal applicability of the models); the piecemeal approach (applying one theory to study Chinese rhetoric to see what Chinese rhetoric doesn’t have); and orientalistic logic (looking for the otherness). However, the challenge for the general approach is that one may ask: “is there a rhetoric that can be universally applied if rhetoric is derived from a specific social and cultural context?” The piecemeal approach can’t answer the questions of why China lacks this theory or why they are different. The way to stress the otherness may lead to an overstatement of the OTHER rhetoric (p. 217-221).

Recent studies by Yu (2009, 2010) provide new angles to see Chinese professional communication in terms of research methodology used and the areas explored. Yu (2009) took a historical approach to examining Chinese instruction writing in China by studying recipes in the past five hundred years. Yu contextualized the study in a historical background and examined the documents visually and textually. She had a goal of challenging previous scholars on instruction writing in China that Chinese instructions show a bad text-visual integration. There are many factors that affect the quality of instructions writing and design. One example, whether good or bad, is not representative of Chinese professional communication practices. It is risky to draw a conclusion of Chinese professional communication by using one example.
Yu (2010) interviewed six technical communication practitioners to learn their perceptions of technical communication in China as a discipline from the perspectives of practitioners, what education they might need, and what industry needs more training. The interview was also supplemented by examining sample writings these professionals completed and voluntarily shared with the researcher. The writings were not publicly posted. A lot of times they were used for achieving daily communication purposes, which is different from communication used for public access. Besides, each of the writings is not the single piece that will stand alone to achieve the goal of communicating. Often it is accompanied by later phone calls, or a continued email exchange to clarify, or exchange information.

**IPC pedagogy “feast” at Stage IV**

IPC pedagogy at this stage takes on a new look, demonstrating strength of good integration of theory with teaching and benefiting from previous scholarship on teaching in addressing the needs of ESL students, adding international user analysis and cultural elements, and expanding intercultural communication pedagogy in our curriculum. Dorren Starke-Meyerring and Natalia Matveena are two representatives in continuing the conversation the field has had in intercultural technical communication. In their research, they both carefully reviewed literature on teaching intercultural communication in professional writing classes (Thrush, Beamer, Weiss, Hoft, Tippens) and how professional writing textbooks address intercultural communication issues (Corbett, Miles, DeVoss, Jasken & Hayden). Miles (1997) best explained why we should examine our textbooks first because textbooks are powerful tools that “send messages about the
nature of a globalized curriculum and a globalized workplace” (p. 181). They send messages not only about the content of courses, but also about attitudes, values, and assumptions. DeVoss et al. (2002) summarized recent literature about the importance of paying attention to intercultural communication and analyzed the productive approaches in textbooks. They presented five challenges for professional communication instructors to consider and offered teaching modules that address these challenges. They concluded that trends indicating a shift from perspective and often negative approaches to ones that begin to address the complexity of intercultural communication. For example, they integrate research articles into textbooks. There are real examples from other countries and cultures. They proposed a discussion-based and student-centered approach. 

Matveena (2006) studied the intercultural communication instruction in the technical communication course in the US by examining the content of available textbooks in the past 20 years. She came to the conclusion that two approaches are commonly used: the information acquisition approach and the dialogic approach. The former approach presents more factual information about each culture as well as stereotypes and the latter treats intercultural communication as interpersonal communication and focuses on developing in students a better understanding of culture by examining one’s own culture. However, she agreed with Corbett that neither approach could help students solve intercultural communication problems. She, therefore, proposed an intercultural sub-curriculum approach. 

Given the worldwide interest in technical communication and an easier online access, St. Amant (2007) called the field to consider offering online technical
communication courses to students located outside the US. His article investigated the potential global market for online education. He then provided pedagogical approaches that would help technical communication instructors and trainers to develop online courses for international delivery.

**Limitations and challenges of Stage IV**

IPC researchers did benefit from a better conceptualization of culture by defining culture as interactional. We have noticed that economic and cultural globalization has brought more to cultural changes. We need to refocus our vision on the processes by which a product is produced. We need to remake the notion of culture as a more flexible analytical tool by examining the interactions of different cultural forces. For example, the small cultures in a classroom setting may result from the interactions of national culture, professional-academic culture, classroom culture, student culture, youth culture, etc (Atkinson, 2004).

A few other problems can still be seen at this stage. IPC researchers have shown some appreciation for other views; however, we need more reports and research on non-US professional communication practices to enrich our understanding so that we can do better comparative studies. Though I applaud the current collaboration between people from different cultural backgrounds but with different levels of subject matter knowledge, I still think we need to meet these following challenges: 1) a better understanding of culture; 2) a better collaboration strategy that will take care of the needs of our decision makers, managers, designers, authors, users, stakeholders; 3) analysis of
more primary cultural artifacts as well as the processes in which discourses were produced (situating the discourse in its social-cultural and historical contexts).

**Conclusion**

As a sub-discipline of professional communication, international professional communication in the United States has undergone a rapid growth in the past 40 years, from addressing the needs of ESL students, to writing and designing for international audiences based on characteristics of national culture, to conducting short-term field research and offering technical writing seminars in China, to developing joint technical communication programs and localizing technical communication in China. We are now living in a “post-global era (or glocal era)” (Pottifroni, p. 117), and a leap forward of the field deserves a rethinking. However, we also need to act with caution because “in our enthusiasm for globalization, we run the risk of overgeneralizing, or broadly applying techniques and strategies to cultures or situations where they don’t fit” (Wiles, 2003, p. 375).

In the U.S., professional communication has been widely recognized as a professional practice and as an academic program since the 1950’s. We have to admit that we still do not know much about professional communication in China. Neither do we have a full picture of professional communication practices in China. We had no choice but accept findings from limited research (Tegtmeier et al., 1999; Alred, 2001; Eaton, 2009) on professional communication in places outside the US, like China, that professional communication (PC) does not exist; PC is not fully recognized as a discipline or a profession; or PC teaching is ad hoc or extracurricular.
Barnum (2001, 2006), Coggin and Coggin (2001), Dragga (1999), Hayhoe (2001, 2003, 2006), Hoft (1999), and St.Amant (2001) have seen big opportunities existing in China for professional communicators and have challenged the field to consider China as the Chinese economy is growing so fast. A number of individuals have made efforts in teaching professional and technical writing in China and introducing technical communication to China. Both Dragga (1998) and Tegtmeier et.al. (1999) reported that the teaching of technical communication in China is “ad hoc and extracurricular” (p. 36). The survey result of technical communication programs outside the US presented by Alred (2001) does not list any programs in China. Even in the most recent research done by Angela Eaton (2009) on graduate programs in technical communication worldwide, we still cannot find a single name of a program in China on her comprehensive list. Therefore, we need to reconsider the ways we have been approaching technical communication in China in order to better and fully understand the topic.

From reviewing the literature of international professional communication, I see three major issues or areas for improvement. First, there is a lack of workable theoretical framework and methodology to guide us in conducting research in international professional communication. Borrowing frameworks from sociology and anthropology, some research treated Chinese culture in a static way and often associated a phenomenon or practice in China with ancient Chinese culture, using stereotyped cultural denominators (Hoft, 1995; Andrews, 1998; Dragga, 1999; Coggin & Coggin, 2001; Ding, 2005). Sometimes researchers rely on interpretive secondary texts, some of which are out-of-date or stereotyped scholarship. Some researchers make assumptions about how
Chinese write based on this old scholarship. For example, Hall (1990), Horton (1993), Hoft (1995), Hager (2000), and Aykin (2006) repeat the same principle on Chinese text direction that Chinese readers generally read top to bottom and right to left. As a native Chinese reader and speaker, I know for certain that it is not the case at all. In ancient times (at least 100 years ago), Chinese did read and write from right to left. Relying on static cultural models and heuristics e.g., collectivism vs. individualism, power distance, and directness vs. indirectness could not address the complexity of international professional communication in the 21st century with large-scale transnational flows of people, goods, ideas, capital, and technologies as well as their impacts on communities at the global, regional, and local levels. Therefore, we need to explore alternative theoretical frameworks and conduct empirical research that allow us to see culture as dynamic, interacting with political, social, and cultural forces and in constant flux. This dissertation meets this need.

Second, there is a goal of globalizing professional communication by imposing or transplanting the U.S. model of professional communication on to other parts of the world based on the understanding that technical communication in other parts of the world is underdeveloped. Most of the research was done by U.S. researchers with a strong bias. Some U.S. researchers went abroad and taught a class or two outside the US the same way they taught in the U.S. by using the same textbooks, providing the same examples, and giving the same assignments. One common strategy where researchers started was looking for the equivalent of technical communication in other cultures. As Hayhoe (2001), Wiles (2003), Barnum (2001), and Ding (2001) have realized, there was
misunderstanding between the goals and expectations of Chinese and American technical communicators. China was more hungry for technology than for technical communication. For quite a while, technical communication was misunderstood as telecommunication (Barnum, 2001; Sun, 2003). Some researchers documented the challenges that Chinese do not understand the rationale for audience analysis as the Chinese used to write for technicians, engineers rather than end users and consumers of products. China’s entry into the WTO required Chinese to produce documentation accompanying products exported to the U.S. in English. More important, this approach has a western bias, which refrains from explaining the effective use of the “Chineseness” in these documents. Therefore, we need an unbiased methodology to examine the current professional communication practice in China by analyzing artifacts and documents from China to acclimate us better to its current professional communication practice. This dissertation adopts this method.

Third, too little research has been done to historicize and contextualize the documents and examine the changes of specific genres with which those documents are classified. Later research (Wang, 2000; Ding, 2001; Barnum & Li, 2006) attempted to be more specific by examining individual technical communication documents, such as recipes and instructions. Wang (2000) studied the graphic uses in Chinese scientific and technical writing. Ding (2001) criticized a user’s guide. Barnum and Li (2006) used a recipe and instructions as examples. However, they approached the situation in China relying on knowledge developed in the U.S. without fully examining the local Chinese context. Some pointed out how Chinese designers broke the “rules,” for example,
providing too much technical information, but they did not put the text into its historical and cultural contexts to explain the reasons. China’s reform and open door policy beginning in 1979, and China’s accession to the WTO are two important watersheds in the history of China. The former is a “push” factor while the latter a “pull” factor. The two forces work together to advance China’s economic development. At the same time, various genres of Chinese professional communication are evolving alongside economic development and business practices. Both the emergence and evolution of each genre manifest social and economic changes that the country experienced during a particular time period. Therefore, new research should contextualize and historicize the documents and examine the changes of specific genres that those documents are classified by. This dissertation provides this type of context.

I concur that it is important to call attention to the social and historical context and study “on its own terms” while studying Chinese rhetorical tradition and professional communication practices. If I were to analyze documents in Chinese, it would make perfect sense that I could use Chinese rhetorical features (language art, Chinese rational thinking, persuasion, and argumentation) to analyze the text. However, the documents I examined in this project are written in English AND for English readers. If we consider the three factors in a communication act---writer, audience, and context, only the writer is Chinese. First, I wonder how many of these terms would really make sense to a western mind if we do use them. Second, as Yu (2009) pointed out, “technical communication in China’ was an oxymoron until these very scholarly works; no methodologies or frameworks could have existed for them to discuss technical communication ‘the Chinese
way””(p. 100). I also wonder if the existing research methods would be suitable for my research.

Culture does not exist by itself. It needs to be presented through language. One obvious phenomenon is the use of English language in the document creation after China’s entry into the WTO as the company is entering the global arena and competing internationally. However, the use of a particular language, grammar, and vocabulary does not necessarily imply a shared value system, a uniform approach to business transaction, or a common pool of knowledge. My assumption is that the documents, written in English for international English speakers, may not completely reflect the cultural thought patterns as Kaplan hypothesized, though, to some extent they may reflect the Chinese rhetorical conventions. My goal was to explore how cultural tradition has translated into the rhetorical conventions of professional communication in China, in terms of stylistic expectations (diction, tone, level of formality), organization patterns, logic, arrangement in discourse, level of details, relationship of writer to reader, and cultural differences in processing graphics. Furthermore, as a bilingual and bicultural researcher, I depict the Chinese rhetoric in a way that is both meaningful to western minds and truthful to its holistic character.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology I followed in conducting my study. It is comprised of three interconnected parts. Part one elaborates on the methodology of grounded theory. Part two justifies the appropriateness of grounded theory with a rhetorical analysis embedded within this research. Part three details the research methods underlying this approach.

Grounded Theory

An overview

Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that focuses on generating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Grounded theory emerged in 1967 when two sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss described their approach to interpreting qualitative data in sociology in their seminal book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. They characterized this approach as an inductive one to generate theory from data systematically collected and analyzed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Their call for developing theories from qualitative data spread to disciplines other than sociology and to professions such as nursing, anthropology, management, information systems, psychology, education, technical communication, and so forth. Widely used as it has been in the past four decades, what constitutes grounded theory remains a contested issue especially among the originators, their students, and other scholars who have taken up this style of inquiry.
Kathy Charmaz, a student of both Glaser and Strauss and also a proponent of constructivist grounded theory, is a representative of the second generation of grounded theory. Charmaz (2006) summarized the defining components of grounded theory practice based on Glaser and Strauss’s 1967 book and later works including Glaser’s *Theoretical Sensitivity* in 1978 and *Emergence Vs. Forcing* in 1992 and Strauss’s *Qualitative Analysis* in 1987 and *Basics of Qualitative Research* in 1990. Here is Charmaz’s summary:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived, logically-deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis. (p. 5-6)

These components associated with a grounded theory practice enable researchers to have control of the research process and to increase their analytic power.
A comparison of grounded theory and other qualitative research methods

In the 1967 book, Glaser and Strauss advocated developing theories from research grounded in data rather than deducing testable hypotheses from existing theories. So from the very beginning, grounded theory differs from other qualitative research methods in a number of ways, especially as to what to start with, when to start the analysis, what process to follow, and what research goals to achieve. Grounded theory is a method that starts with data and with the goal of generating theories, especially formal theories, not just substantive theories; other methods start with an existing theory or preconceived hypotheses and the research goal is to test theories or verify hypotheses. Grounded theory does not favor large initial samples; instead, it involves the researcher in data analysis while collecting data—this data analysis later informs and shapes further data collection. Grounded theory elevates qualitative inquiry from pure description to the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks, thereby providing abstract, conceptual understandings of the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2007).

Grounded theory is good for exploring a social phenomenon, disciplined development of new ideas, finding theory and structure in domains where there is no a priori guidance, keeping an open mind while exploring a new domain; however, it is not good for testing hypotheses, evaluating a formal theory, or confirming a hunch (Muller, 2010).

In contrast with grounded theory, such qualitative research methods as ethnography and case study are insufficient for this research project because neither allows me to investigate the current professional communication practices across genres.
and time periods and in multiple locations. Ethnography requires a researcher to directly observe the activity of members of a social group during a prolonged period of time, to take detailed field notes so that the researcher can describe the activity in details, and evaluate the activity (Creswell, 2007). Robert Yin (2009) defines case study as follows:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and
- multiple sources of evidence are used. (p. 18)

Locke better illustrates the three as “the grounded theory style of data interpretation has been blended with the case study design and with ethnographic approaches to produce adaptations of this approach to qualitative research” (2001, p. 19). If my goal were to examine how one Chinese company practices its internal and external communications, I would either need to work in the company as an observer and ethnographer for a year and then describe and evaluate what I see there or use multiple sources of evidence to study the case (this Chinese company) to explore the phenomenon and its real-life context.

**A sample grounded theory analysis process**

Creswell (1997) cited two primary characteristics of grounded theory as “the constant comparison of data with emerging categories, and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information” (p. 12). Anyone who conducts research can use the basic grounded theory principles such as coding, memo-writing, and sampling for theory development (Charmaz, 2006).
Grounded theorists often start their research with certain guiding empirical interests to
study and a set of general concepts. These concepts sensitize the researcher to ask
particular questions about the topic. For example, the idea for my research study
originated when I saw more and more job ads in China asking for both an English resume
and a Chinese resume. Resume as a genre does not have a long history in China. It is
really the design and writing of a Chinese resume written in English that intrigues me.
What are the common content areas of a Chinese resume? Does the use of English
language change the topics to be covered in a resume? To what extent is it different from
a resume used in the U.S.? What are the cultural dimensions of a Chinese resume? What
are the unique features of a Chinese resume written in English and used in China? What
factors account for these features? How do these features impact our understanding of a
broader world? Intrigued by these questions, I started with collecting a few current
resumes to study.

Grounded theory is a complete methodology which systematically applies five
different methods for data analysis

- Open coding of the data for conceptual understanding
- Constant comparison of codes, concepts, and categories as they emerge from
  the data
- Memo writing for clarity of thought
- Discovery of the core category which becomes the focus for selective coding
- Theoretical coding that investigates the links between categories (Georgieva
  & Allan, 2008, p. 45)
Using these methods systematically makes the analysis coherent and rigorous, leading to holistic conclusions.

In her book *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Charmaz (2006) provided “a way of doing grounded theory that takes into account the theoretical and methodological developments of the past four decades” (p. 9). Charmaz emphasized flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements (2006). She suggested the grounded theory process shown in figure 3.1.
As we can see, the research process is not a linear one; instead, it is very iterative. Although different methods can be used to gather rich data, grounded theory data gathering does not start with a large volume of data. As soon as data gathering starts, data analysis follows along and even shapes and informs further data gathering. Data
analysis takes the form of coding, memoing, theoretical sampling, constant comparison, and categorizing before generating theories.

Coding refers to the process of labeling bits of data according to what they indicate. There are two main types of grounded theory coding: “1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Initial coding entails a close reading of the early data in the hope of generating analytic ideas that can be pursued in further data collection and analysis. It is important that during initial coding, the researcher should remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the readings of the data. Later, focused coding is used to pinpoint and develop the most salient categories in a large batch of data. Theoretical integration begins with focused coding and proceeds through all the subsequent analytic steps (Charmaz, 2006).

The researcher analyzes data by constant comparison, initially of data with data, progressing to comparison between their interpretations translated into codes and categories and more data. The iterative comparison across companies, methods, and evidence leads to the emergence of concepts.

Memo-writing is a unique and crucial aspect of grounded theory research because it not only directs the researcher on how to further gather and compare data, but also assists the researcher in exploring certain codes that crystallize meanings and action in the data and raising focused codes to conceptual categories. Memo-writing can start when the first data collection and analysis begins as long as any concepts emerge from
the data. Memos serve as a record of the analytic process. They can be revisited, reviewed, and revised in the process in order to improve the quality of data analysis. They also provide clues as to where to seek additional data to strengthen categories.

In a grounded theory study, once some tentative categories emerge while ideas are not complete, the researcher needs to go through the next stage which is called theoretical sampling—the strategy of obtaining further selective data to elaborate and refine categories. Theoretical sampling is necessary because it can prevent the researcher from getting stuck in unfocused analyses. Theoretical sampling is conducted by sampling to develop the properties of the categories until no new properties emerge (Charmaz, 2006).

Simultaneous data collection and analysis lasts throughout a grounded theory study process. Data gathering stops only when categories are “saturated,” which means that “gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of these core theoretical categories” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113). Glaser (2001) cautioned that “saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge” (p. 191). It is this perspective on saturation that forms the foundation for treating theoretical concepts in grounded theory. Treating categories theoretically not only raises these categories to an abstract level, but at the same time preserves their specific connections to the data from which categories are constructed (Charmaz, 2006).

Both Glaser and Charmaz insist that theoretical saturation is what grounded theorists should aim for. Once categories are saturated, the researcher uses such
strategies as sorting memos, diagramming concepts, and integrating both to develop theories. Sorting provides the researcher a logic for organizing analysis and a way of creating and refining theoretical links that prompt the researcher to compare categories at an abstract level (Charmaz, 2006). Diagramming provides a visual representation of categories and their relationships, which is an intrinsic part of grounded theory methods. Based on a specific context or situation, sorting and diagramming give an initial analytic frame while integrating makes the relationships among theoretical categories intelligible. All three strategies combined spark ideas for constructing and writing the theoretical framework.

**The strengths and challenges of grounded theory**

Muller (2010) included these as the strengths of grounded theory: outcomes are grounded in the data; theory is continually tested through constant comparison; and data-collection is guided by theoretical sampling. A grounded theory study details the research process of how theory is generated starting with data and soon moving to codes, to concepts, to categories, and finally to theory, shown in figure 2. The resultant theory does not need separate justification and testing because it is derived from data.
Allan (2003) cited the following as challenges in the coding process: what was a code, when coding should be ended, and when to finish analysis. However, one of the basic assumptions of grounded theory methods is that it does not give rise to findings, but rather provides a tentative explanation of the studied phenomenon through the creation of a theory or theoretical model (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 25). This tentative explanation may inspire more research, eventually leading to a solid theory—more generally applicable and having greater explanatory and predictive power—because “theory based
on data can usually not be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 4).

Using grounded theory assisted me in avoiding exploring the current professional communications practices in China based on impressions, assumptions, or subjective bias; instead, I could construct the reality relying on data (mostly primary documents created by Chinese in English and used for global audiences) collected from different sources and at various stages.

**Rationales for Adopting Grounded Theory**

This generative approach of grounded theory was adopted because it fits the exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory orientation of this research. Here I highlighted three particular reasons for adopting grounded theory.

First, the grounded theory approach allows me the channel to examine the features of current Chinese professional communication practices by constructing the description and theory in tandem as well as providing a contextual and cultural explanation of the features. Unlike other qualitative research methodology that starts with a preconceived concept and continues to test or confirm the concepts through research, grounded theory starts with an inductive approach and constructs analysis in a systematic way with data collected simultaneously. Only in this way is the researcher not contaminated or excessively influenced by prior studies. Grounded theory not only produces detailed substantive findings, but also produces a more general explanation. It is due to this powerful explanatory power that grounded theory has appeal in many
disciplines. The grounded theory approach is useful here because this study aims to generate a descriptive and explanatory theory of changes in the Chinese professional communication practices after China’s entry into the WTO.

Second, according to Martin and Turner (1986), grounded theory “is an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data” (p. 141). Besides, grounded theory does not require a preconceived hypothesis. Traditional research designs usually start with a literature review to form a hypothesis which is then tested by experimentation in the real world. On the other hand, in grounded theory “the rule for generation of theory is not to have any pre-set hypotheses” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 194). In this research study, the limited discussion of Chinese professional communication practices in the literature does not allow a valuable preconceived hypothesis to be developed. It is a new research area without a defining theory. Therefore, grounded theory is appropriate for this study.

Third, by adopting grounded theory methods, I can direct and manage my data and construct an original analysis, which is the basis for an exploratory research project. The major difference between grounded theory and other methods is its specific approach to theory development—grounded theory suggests that there should be a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis. During the data collection process, the researcher could enjoy the freedom to make adjustment. A grounded theory approach with the focus on the iterative comparison across sites, methods, evidence, and literature has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias.
Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006) argue that grounded theory serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them. Grounded theory is not used to discover an objective reality, but as flexible, heuristic strategies to understand and interpret empirical worlds in their multiplicity and relativity (Charmaz, 2006). Although grounded theory guidelines describe the steps of the research process and provide a path through it, researchers still have the freedom to adopt and adapt them to conduct diverse studies in different disciplines within different contexts.

**How was Grounded Theory Adapted and Employed**

There is no comprehensive study of current Chinese professional communication practices. As a new research area without a defining theory, grounded theory is adapted and employed because it is a research method that seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. The research process of my grounded theory method is displayed in figure 3.3.
Gathering data

It was ambitious and impractical to study all Chinese professional communication practices because professional communication encompasses a full range of topics. To relate it more to my research questions and make this study manageable, I decided to select three less-studied genres: instructions/manuals, corporate annual reports, and
resumes. I did this for the following reasons: First, since they are not heavily studied areas, no substantial amount of literature exists. Such a fact is good for this particular study because it not only conforms to the conditions of conducting exploratory grounded theory, but also the theory generated from this study can contribute to balancing the study in different aspects of professional communication. Second, these three specific genres are quite related to or have something to do with China’s entry into the WTO. For example, the WTO agreements require that when Chinese products are exported to the world, an English version of documentation, such as manuals, needs to be provided to accompany the products. After China’s entry into the WTO, more and more Chinese companies are committed to recruiting employees who show potential to become competent in working with international partners, clients, and customers. The ability to speak and write well in English is considered as a strong marker. This partially explains why in posting jobs, companies specify that an English version of a resume is required for a position. In addition to serving the purpose of reporting the financial achievements of a company, the corporate annual report has also been used as a marketing tool for a company. After China’s entry into the WTO, more and more Chinese companies are seeking global investment resources by becoming a publicly-traded company at the U.S. stock exchanges. How do these U.S.-listed Chinese companies communicate and persuade international audiences who could be potential investors?

The best way to study the practices in these three genres is to examine the real documents created by individuals or companies in the English language. I used these real documents: the user’s manual for a microwave from Haier, Baidu’s 2008 annual report,
and resumes submitted to the human resources department of a Chinese company for a particular position. The first two can be easily accessed from the companies’ Web sites (http://www.haier.com/servicesupport/manualSearch.asp; http://ir.baidu.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=188488&p=irol-reportsAnnual).

**Contextual and visual analyses**

*Contextual analysis*

Unlike other contrastive rhetoric research that explores the rhetorical and linguistic patterns, this study goes beyond that and also explores how the writers position themselves (to establish a unique reader-writer relationship) and how they address their readers by the use of selective rhetorical strategies and linguistic devices.

Charmaz warned against “studying text without contexts, or even worse, studying text out of contexts” (2006, p. 39). To avoid such a risk, texts need to be situated in their contexts. Charmaz suggested a few ways to place texts into context. For example, she suggested using multiple methods like interviewing key participants, and using several types of documents, archival data, especially texts that tell the story behind other texts because at least they suggest the social contexts for the analysis. In my study, I painstakingly examine and describe the historical and cultural contexts for the production of documents in each genre, especially the genres (annual report and resume) that have emerged or developed in China’s recent history to provide some background information to help readers understand each genre and its features.
**Visual analysis**

“Seeing comes before words,” says John Berger (1972). I therefore started my analysis with the visual aspects of the documents to be analyzed. In the process of describing the visual features, those items that appear “strange” or “weird” to a western audience were given more meticulous analysis instead of solely applying western design principles for interpretation. In addition to applying the principle of center/peripheral shared by both scholars from the west, for example Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), and a Chinese sociologist Fei (2000), I also “borrowed” Chinese architecture design principles such as the yin/yang principle and the principle of asymmetry that might have transferred in Chinese graphic design to illustrate the particularity or the “Chineseness” of the design. For visual analysis, I first described the overall impression, the physical look, the quality of paper, the color of paper if applied, readability (how easy it is to read a document, font, font size, special treatment of any text), and integration of content and design.

**Textual analysis and coding**

According to Charmaz, all qualitative research entails analyzing texts (2006, p, 35). In grounded theory textual analysis, there are two primary sources of data: elicited texts and extant texts (Charmaz, 2006). The former refers to any text where research participants were involved in writing while the latter refers to the texts that were not contributed or affected by the researcher. I was not involved in any manner with the text construction of any of these documents I study. They were ready products when they
reached me. So my texts used in this research study are extant texts, in Charmaz’s term. I started with the content of the texts.

Coding is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations. “Coding means categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43) so that we can use codes to show how we select, separate, and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them. Consistent with a grounded theory emphasis on emergence, questions about these codes arise from my reading of the data rather than emanating from an earlier frame applied to them.

Grounded theory coding generated the bones of my analysis. It was where analysis started, but it was more than a beginning; it also shaped an analytic frame from which I built the analysis. My coding consisted of initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding. Different from other grounded theory research, my coding could not be divided into clear-cut phases (for example, an initial coding phase, a focused coding phase) because data collection, coding, and analysis overlapped and proceeded iteratively through the entire research process. Research at the early stages was more open-ended and generative. Later research was more directed by the emerging concepts found from the early coding and involving more strategic selection of documents. However, theoretical integration did not begin until focused coding started and proceeded through all of my subsequent analytic steps.
**Initial coding**

Initial coding entailed a close reading of the data. While engaged in initial coding, I examined the documents in the first collection (mostly documents created before China’s entry into the WTO) to see what analytic ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis. Depending on the meaning-making unit existing in each type of document, word-by-word coding and segment-by-segment coding were used if the texts were presented in a table or segment format while line-by-line coding was used for texts in a paragraph format. Charmaz suggested using active verbs when coding (2006). Some of the codes I jotted down at the margins represented analytic ideas. During initial coding, the goal was to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the readings of the data. This is called open coding, and it relied on an analytic technique for identifying possible categories and their properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). After I finished coding one document or group of documents (resumes) created before China’s entry into the WTO in one genre, I examined these codes and compared all the codes to see what pattern emerged. Later, I took these emerging concepts and applied them to documents selected from other companies. This was where focused coding started.

**Focused coding**

Focused coding means “using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 58). It is employed to pinpoint and develop the most salient categories in a large batch of data. Instead of passively reading texts, I acted upon the data to detect similarities and compare differences. During
focused coding, one goal was to determine the adequacy of the codes. New concepts emerged from the constant comparison between data and data and between codes and data. Another goal was to contrast and qualify the initial concepts that emerged in open coding. The emergence of new themes urged me to revisit the first document and the codes. This process helped me decide which initial codes made the most analytic sense to categorize my data. After this focused coding of the second stack of documents created before 2002, the same procedure was repeated to conduct an initial coding and focused coding of documents created after China’s entry into the WTO.

The strength of grounded theory coding derives from this concentrated, active involvement in the process. After I finished open coding and focused coding of the second set of data, I conducted another comparative analysis by revisiting the data and then comparing the data and the codes derived from the documents before 2002 as well as comparing two sets of data (documents from both before and after 2002), and the codes derived respectively. This iterative examination produced a set of broad categories that characterize the documents both before and after China’s entry into the WTO and described the changes during the two historical periods.

New categories emerged from this comparative analysis. Theoretical coding is a sophisticated level of coding that follows the codes selected during focused coding. Theoretical codes specify possible relationships between categories developed in focused coding. Hence, these codes not only conceptualize how my substantive codes were related, but also move my analytic story in a theoretical direction.
**Rhetorical analysis**

While textual analysis emphasizes what is in a text, rhetorical analysis helps us see how the text is used to achieve the communicative purposes of the writing, and how the text is organized to address the relationship between authors and audiences. Textual analysis is good at describing what is happening in a text. However, a detailed description may lead to a few places where we may not understand why something was there. Therefore, we may need to know the rationale, reasons behind such concepts and their relationships. Rhetorical analysis can be used to develop insight into the communication practices associated with business and industry and insight into particular forms of professional communication discourse. Most grounded theory studies do not have a rhetorical analysis embedded. In my study, I embedded a rhetorical analysis in the grounded theory methodology because a combination of textual, visual, and rhetorical analysis contributes more to the understanding of how writers responded to a rhetorical situation. A detailed rhetorical analysis drawn from traditional rhetorical theory was employed to consider how the documents use the appeals of ethos, logos, and pathos as well as how they employed specific forms of language and stylistic devices to advance these appeals. The ultimate goal of employing a rhetorical analysis was to illustrate how the author(s) of a text attempted to persuade, and how that analysis could be fashioned to yield a deeper insight than would otherwise be impossible if the text were judged only on the textual basis. My rhetorical analysis followed the sequence of activities as suggested by Mark Zachry (2009): 1). Identify text(s) for analysis; 2). Categorize the texts according to purpose and type; 3). Identify constituent parts of texts; and 4). Interpret and
discuss one or more configurations of the parts and/or whole of the text in relationship with some overarching theoretical concepts (p. 70).

**Memo-writing**

As I mentioned earlier, grounded theory research is not a linear process. Although I numbered memo-writing as the fourth step, it does not mean that it did not start until I finished coding. On the contrary, I started writing short memos as soon as I started open coding of the first document. Certain codes stood out and in the memos they were treated as conceptual categories to analyze. Memo-writing helped me not only to become actively engaged with the data, but also to catch my thoughts, to develop my ideas, and to fine-tune my subsequent data-gathering. Memo-writing was a great way for me to make comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes of data and other codes, codes and concepts, and categories.

**Theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation**

Theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to develop the emerging theory after tentative categories are constructed. The main purpose of theoretical sampling is to obtain new data to explicate and refine the categories. I conducted theoretical sampling by starting with data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas through further empirical inquiry. For example, I checked historical records and archival materials, consulted people with expert knowledge in a particular area or lived experience, and discussed my initial findings with individuals who provided me the first set of data. Engaging in theoretical sampling assisted me in
learning where and how I could find needed data to fill gaps and to saturate categories. The iteration of data, concepts, and categories ended when no additional data were collected or new themes emerged to add to the set of concepts and categories, which means that the categories are saturated.

**Sorting memos, diagramming, and generating theory**

The last step was to integrate emerging theory by sorting, comparing, and integrating memos as well as diagramming the categories. By this point, I could see clearly how crucial memo-writing is in grounded theory study. Each memo usually contained a category. Some sets of memos fit together because they showed a relationship among themselves. While sorting these memos, it was also a chance to compare the categories. As a result of sorting, I saw the relationships between the categories. To visually represent all the categories and their relationships, I created a diagram for each genre. This sorting and diagramming process led to the initial analytic frame, which later contributed to forming substantive theories in each genre I studied.

**An Outline of the Following Chapters**

In the following four chapters, I will detail how I followed this method to conduct research on current Chinese professional communication practices by Chinese companies and individuals. I focused on three genres of documents produced by Chinese in English, examined the changes in terms of content and design from 2000 to 2009 and characterized the salient features of each genre, and concluded each chapter with
substantive theories\textsuperscript{2} in each genre. Chapter four presents purposely abandoned research on instructions and manual writing in English in China from 2001-2009 by following the grounded theory protocol. It looks incomplete; however, I addressed the reasons for discontinuing the research on instructions and in the last chapter when I discussed the limitations of this research, I mentioned the main reasons again and provided ways for improvements, which will be a follow-up research project in the coming years. Chapter five examines the CEO letters of annual reports from U.S.-listed Chinese companies from 2001 to 2009. Chapter six examines resume writing practice in China. Chapter seven develops a formal grounded theory of current Chinese professional communication practices by cross-examining substantive theories from the three substantive areas (three genres in this case).

\textsuperscript{2} Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 32. “By substantive theory, we mean that developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations. By formal theory, we mean that developed for a formal, or conceptual, area of sociological inquiry, such as stigma, deviant behavior, formal organization, socialization, status congruency, authority and power, reward systems, or social mobility.
CHAPTER FOUR

A MULTI-LAYERED ANALYSIS OF INSTRUCTIONS/MANUAL WRITING IN CHINA THROUGH A GROUNDED THEORY LENS

Background

Documentation is not new to Chinese manufacturing companies. Even before the 1970s, there were manuals, written in Chinese, for limited products. Manuals were historically hard for laypeople to understand because they were not written and designed for end users of a product (Honald, 1999; Barnum & Li, 2006). During the era of planned economy in China from 1949-1979, products’ production and sales were controlled by the government. Production was quite limited and a product had a prospect of staying for a longer time because ordinary citizens did not have disposable money to purchase many products at all. For state-owned enterprises, post-sale service (in modern times, customer service) almost did not exist. Given these social economical contexts, a special profession/trade emerged: repairman. This group of people was not associated with any company at all. They usually received some vocational training or learned the skills through apprenticeship. For example, in the 1970s, radio was popular in Chinese households. If something went wrong with the radio set, there was no way to take it back to the store where it was purchased or contact the factory where it was made. People also could not afford to replace it with a new one for two reasons. First, products were not widely available in stores (ration system). Second, it is way beyond the purchasing power (a radio could cost a half month income for a worker family while the majority of the population at that time were farmers who did not have an income at all) to get a new
radio. An alternative was to take it to a repair shop to get it fixed for a cost of maybe 1/50 of a new radio. Therefore, during that period, manuals were mostly used by the repairman. The repairman might not need any theoretical information or procedural information; rather they relied on diagrams and technical specifications to figure out the problems and then fix them.

After China adopted reform and the open door policy in 1979, the Chinese economy developed rapidly. Not only more products have become available, but people’s living standards have improved dramatically. In the early 1990s, it might have been possible to still see those repair shops on a street, mostly for washing machines (no dryers in China) or refrigerators. Now it is rare to see one repair shop. Technological advancements contribute to the increased productivity and decreased cost of merchandise. Thus, mostly people replace a broken product with a new one.

In the last decade, air-conditioners and other home and kitchen appliances have become popular in Chinese households. We finally see the possible direct connection between manuals and consumers. Still, we cannot forget this interesting phenomenon in China. For instance, when you buy an air-conditioner in China from a department store, you pay for the product at the store and you do not need to worry about how to move it to your house (most Chinese do not own a vehicle). The store arranges to have it delivered to your house and installed without a charge. These delivery workers have received some job training after they were hired and they usually give customers demonstrations and verbal instructions on how to use the product. In addition to delivery workers, sales

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3 Chinese do not use dryers for two reasons: 1. To save energy; 2. People believe in the ultra sunlight to kill germs.
people at the retail sector who have direct face-to-face contact with buyers (potential users or consumers) also assume the role of explaining how a product works; how to install, assemble, or set it up; how to maintain a product via live demonstrations. The goal of selling the product to a customer far outweighs presenting accurate and exact information or facts to inform and persuade users. Nevertheless, their unofficial and unrecognized role as technical communicators in a unique Chinese economic environment should be made visible and acknowledged.

In the era of globalization, China not only becomes a huge market to consume products from all over the world, but also a producer. In the 1990s many Chinese enterprises chose to go through the process to get ISO 9001 certified. The certification drive comes from the goal to achieve customer satisfaction through consistent products and services which meet customer expectations. However, certification to an ISO 9001 standard does not guarantee any quality of end products and services; rather, it certifies that formalized business processes are being applied. Besides, certification is voluntary, which means that companies may choose not to get ISO 9001 certified.

China’s entry into the WTO, however, presents a totally different picture. First, compliance with the WTO treaties is required, not voluntary. Second, Chinese companies are now competing in a global market and their documentation and manuals must meet the information needs of an international audience. When Chinese companies sell their products overseas, they cannot afford to have products delivered to each household and installed. Customers need to understand and feel comfortable using a Chinese product after purchasing it by reading the instructions and performing the tasks
themselves. Therefore, the effectiveness of manuals becomes crucial to a company’s
customer recognition and success overseas.

China does export a wide variety of products to the U.S. markets. Quite often we see China-made household appliances in the U.S. Haier is probably the most noticeable Chinese household appliance producer and the most recognizable Chinese brand on the U.S. markets. The ownership, the geographical location, and the size of an enterprise make more sense within China than outside China. When a product is shipped to the US, customers may only notice that it is made in China.

Haier is listed as the no.1 Chinese company that produces and exports household appliances. Haier has a very interesting ownership. It is neither a state-owned enterprise nor a completely publicly-owned company. Instead, it says it is a collective, which means that its employees own it. However, it is not completely the case either. In 2000, Haier established a production facility in South Carolina. Its Haier America headquarters is in New York.

I interviewed Haier customer services on the phone after I finished coding the first manual. They are not exactly sure who wrote all the manuals. They assume they were written by people in the country where the products are sold. I am not sure if that customer service representative fully understood what I meant by documentation. I tried to call the Service and Support of Haier with the phone number provided on its Web site, unfortunately, it was an automatic message. When I gave the prompt of getting manuals, I was told to visit the Haier Web site. There was no option for me to choose to be able to speak to a live Haier representative. I searched for a name on its site. With an email
account to reach the Public Relations, I sent my inquiry and a senior public relations manager replied to my email. He explained that most of the products are produced in China. The manuals were originally written in Chinese and then translated into English. It was not clear from what he said who did the translation, a Chinese who knows English, or a native speaker of English who knows Chinese. In translation theory, it is advised to find an individual who is from the country where the products will be used to do the translation. This way, it is certain that readers will understand the translation better. He also explained that there is no way for him to detect which one was translated, and when (before 2001 or after) because there are thousands of products with different models.

**Reasons for Discontinuing the Study of This Genre**

Companies do remodel their products and it is hard to stay with the same model for ten years. The original criteria I set up earlier did not work because the manual in 2009 could be written by a native speaker of English for American markets. There is a good chance I would be comparing a document created by a Chinese and a document created by an American, which is not what I had expected to do. Due to this factor, I decided to end my instructions analysis. Grounded theory is not appropriate for examining the manual writing in China as I had planned for this study. Ethnography and case study could be better options to understand the manual writing practices. However, I did not have time to change my research methodology to accommodate this genre. Gladly, constant comparison and analysis in grounded theory gives me this option of discontinuing a study if the initial coding and analysis could not lead to the direction where an emergent theory can be generated.
CHAPTER FIVE

A MULTI-LAYERED ANALYSIS OF ANNUAL REPORTS BY U.S.-LISTED CHINESE COMPANIES THROUGH A GROUNDED THEORY LENS

Background

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) defines an annual report as “the principal document used by most public companies to disclose corporate information to their shareholders.” (http://www.sec.gov/answers/annrep.htm). Usually it reports the current state of a publicly traded company, including “an opening letter from the Chief Executive Officer, financial data, results of continuing operations, market segment information, new product plans, subsidiary activities, and research and development activities on future programs.” The annual report has been an SEC requirement for businesses owned by the public since 1934. The SEC requires reporting companies not only to send annual reports to their shareholders, but also to post their annual report on their company Web sites.

For domestic U.S. companies, the SEC requires the Form 10-K to be filed with the SEC, which “typically contains more detailed information about the company’s financial condition than the annual report.” It is also common to see that companies simply send their Form 10-K to their shareholders instead of an annual report. For international companies that are listed on the U.S. stock exchanges, the SEC requires Form 20-F to be filed every year, which has the same function as Form 10-K for U.S.-based companies (http://www.sec.gov.)
The major difference between the annual report and Form 10-K or Form 20-F is that the annual report is for shareholders; Form 10-K and Form 20-F are for the SEC filing. Carol David (2001) reviewed more than 230 annual reports from a wide range of companies and she followed the traditional division of five features: “the cover, executive letter, narrative summary of yearly activities, financial review, and listing of the board of directors, sometimes followed by additional photographs on the back inside cover” (p. 197). Companies may elect to design a particular annual report for their shareholders with all the SEC required materials, but presented in a way that companies believe would reach their shareholders better. In terms of content, they may choose to add an opening letter to shareholders from the company CEO to a Form 10-K or Form 20-F and call this annual report, as a way to differentiate it from the SEC filing. If that is the case, on company Web sites, there will be two separate files posted. For example, the following is a screen capture of the page where two files are posted, the left column giving the option of choosing an annual report while the right column provides access to a 20F.
The genre of corporate reporting is new for many Chinese companies listed both in China and overseas. A few reasons prompted me to study corporate annual reports and their inclusive CEO letters of U.S. listed Chinese companies. First, there is no published literature on the reporting techniques used by U.S.-listed Chinese companies, let alone research from the perspective of a historical comparison, especially before China’s entry into the WTO and after. However, all the U.S.-listed Chinese companies have to meet the SEC requirements by filing each year with the SEC as well as sending their annual reports to shareholders. The goal of listing in the U.S. is to access the capital market in the U.S. where a large percentage of the investors are speakers of English. So annual reports have to be written in English. The fact that these companies operate in China, in an economic environment quite different from that in the U.S., forces corporate writers to
Figure out a strategy to report the state-of-the-company in a way that can be better understood by American investors. Although I am interested in whether the CEO letters are persuasive enough to gain American investors’ confidence and trust in investing in these companies, it is beyond the scope of this study to test the impacts of annual reports on the company stocks. Of course, both listing companies and international investors would like to find out answers to the relationships between annual reports and performance of stocks. I consider that research as the second stage. First of all, we need to have a clear and accurate description of how these listing companies are composing their annual reports.

A recent article by Conaway and Wardrope (2010) in the *Journal of Business Communication* studied the CEO letters by the CEOs of 30 U.S.-based companies and 24 Latin America-based companies listed on the NYSE. The authors believe that open coding used in grounded theory “would provide the best foundation for discovering thematic patterns in CEO letters” because there were no initial categories to guide them (Conaway & Wardrope, 2010, p. 148).

The annual report letter written by the CEO has several synonyms, such as annual letter to stockholders, manager’s message, from the CEO, chairman’s statement, and so on. In this study, I call it “the CEO’s letter”. It belongs to the broader corporate communication genre. It serves multiple purposes and multiple audiences. One main function is to use a narrative style to promote the company. Given this communication goal it serves, the CEO’s letter also belongs to the promotional writing genre.
Who writes the CEO’s letter? It should be the person who signs this letter. In reality, it can be hard to say one person wrote it; instead, it is the end product of a corporate collaborative endeavor. The chairman, the CEO, the president (Chief Operating Officer), the chief financial officer (CFO), or the chief legal officer (CLO) all contribute to this document so that it embodies the voice of the top management of the company. When I interviewed the IR managers of both companies, I asked them who wrote this CEO’s letter, but I did not get a direct answer. One announced to me twice that “Our CEO signed it.” I interpreted what she said as it was not completely written by the CEOs. They read it before they signed it.

Given the dearth of research into this particular aspect of descriptive and comparative study of corporate annual reports and their inclusive CEO’s letters by U.S.-listed Chinese companies, grounded theory emerged as the most appropriate method of inquiry in my study. My study attempted to answer these research questions:

RQ1: How have common topics and rhetorical strategies contained in the CEO letters changed over the last ten years?

RQ2: To what extent do CEO letters reflect common topics of financial reporting information, internal control, social issues, as well as cultural motives and cultural contexts?

RQ3: What rhetorical strategies do corporate writers use in the CEO’s letters to influence their shareholders?

Using the methods outlined in chapter 3, in the following I first explain my data collection process and what data I used for analyzing annual reports. Then I present
contextual and visual analyses of these annual reports from three Chinese companies collected at different stages of research. Contextual analyses provide background information to the three Chinese companies while visual analyses focus on the visual aspects of selected annual reports from these three companies. I discussed the visual features of annual reports from each company before WTO and then compared those with annual reports after WTO. After contextual and visual analyses, I conducted detailed textual analysis of selected CEO’s letters from each company’s annual reports before WTO and after WTO by using grounded theory’s coding process. Following textual analyses, I present a type of rhetorical analysis of one CEO’s letter to examine how the author and reader relationship was portrayed in this letter. Then I briefly discussed the memos (notes) I wrote in the analysis process and finally presented two diagrams of annual reports before WTO and after WTO. Based on the comparison of these two diagrams, I discussed the research findings with features of annual report writing and their associated cultural motives and contexts.

**Gathering Data**

The annual reports selected for this study ranged in length from 90 pages to 202 pages. To make the analysis more manageable, I deconstructed each annual report to its components as used by Carol David when she reviewed more than 230 annual reports: the cover, executive letter, narrative summary of yearly activities, financial review, and listing of the board of directors (2001, p. 197). Each part adopts a different persuasion strategy. For this study, I focus on the cover page of the annual reports and the executive
letters because they are the most widely read parts of an annual report (Coutis, 1982; Conaway & Wardrope, 2010; David, 2001; Hyland, 1998; Lord, 2002; Thomas, 1997).

**Site selection**

Sinopec celebrated its ten year anniversary on the NYSE on October 19, 2010. Sinopec was selected as a research site for a number of reasons. First of all, it represents one of the first groups of Chinese companies to seek international funding opportunities. Through ADR in 2000, it was successfully listed on the NYSE. It has been performing well since then. Second, given the fact that in the past ten years Sinopec has won the “best annual report” award by both *Investor Relations* magazine and *CFO Asia* magazine three times, “best investor relationship” award, and “best IR enterprise Web site” award (http://english.sinopec.com/investor_center/corporate_governance/awards/), I assume that its annual report may show a few salient features that exemplify China-based companies. Third, Sinopec was originally a state-owned enterprise (SOE). Its history represents a unique enterprise transformation from a state-invested company to a publicly-traded company with the state controlling 75% of its stocks (http://www.sinopec.com). Its business is mostly manufacturing and part infrastructure and part “red chip.” It is interesting to examine such a business and financial transformation in the new age and in a new environment. Many investment agents and international investment forums often do not advise individuals to invest or at least buy with caution because of the risks and fear of government involvement (McIntyre, 2007). Last but not the least, its annual reports are easily accessible and well organized on its Web site at http://english.sinopec.com/investor_center/reports/
Sohu.com Inc. (Sohu) is an Internet company in China, providing Chinese with news, information, entertainment, and communication. The Company’s business consists of advertising, online games, and wireless business. Sohu.com was selected mostly for three reasons. First, it represents those Chinese high-tech companies that first appeared in mid 1990s and developed rapidly in the last 15 years. Unlike Sinopec that is listed on NYSE, Sohu is listed on the other large U.S. stock exchange NASDAQ, which makes it a good balance and better representation. Third, it is easy to access its annual reports in the last 10 years from 2000-2009 on its Web site at http://corp.sohu.com/s2005/annualreport-en.shtml

Taking advantage of the constant comparative analysis protocol in grounded theory, I did not have to collect my research data all at once. Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously and further data collection was shaped and directed by the preliminary analysis results after initial coding and analysis and/or even focused coding and analysis until analysis reached the point of saturation. For example, Baidu.com was a third company that I researched for this study during the theoretical sampling stage. It is also a high-tech company, the same as sohu.com. It is meaningful to see if the industry type may make a big difference. However, my analysis focused more on Sinopec and Sohu. I referred to Baidu’s annual reports a few times in the study in order to verify what I found from the other two companies.

**Introduction to the three companies**

Altogether, I studied annual reports from three Chinese companies at different stages of the research, namely Sinopec, Sohu, and Baidu. The companies differ in a
number of ways. They were founded in different years; they were listed on different stock exchanges in the U.S. and entered the U.S. market at different times; they have different ownerships; they are different in size; however, their current headquarters are all located in Beijing. All their annual reports are easily available from their company’s Web sites.

**Sinopec**

China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec Corp) is one of the largest China-based integrated energy and chemical companies. The Company, through its subsidiaries, engages in oil and gas and chemical operations in China, operating in four business segments: the exploration and production segment, the refining segment, the marketing and distribution segment and the chemicals segment. On Oct. 18, 2000, Sinopec became a NYSE listed company with the stock code of SNP. By the end of 2009, the Company's total number of shares was 86.7 billion, of which 75.84% were held by Sinopec Group, 19.35% were shares listed overseas and 4.81% were domestic public shares. Sinopec Group, the largest shareholder of Sinopec Corp., is a super-large petroleum and petrochemical group incorporated by the State in 1998 based on the former China Petrochemical Corporation. Funded by the State, it is a State authorized investment arm and State-owned controlling company.

(http://english.sinopec.com/about_sinopec/our_company/20100328/8532.shtml)
Sohu

Sohu.com Inc. (Sohu) is an Internet company in China, providing Chinese with news, information, entertainment and communication. The Company’s business consists of advertising, online game and wireless business. The company was formerly known as Internet Technologies China Incorporated and changed its name to Sohu.com Inc. in September 1999 (http://corp.sohu.com). Sohu.com Inc. was founded in 1996 and is based in Beijing, the People’s Republic of China. Sohu has built one of the most comprehensive matrices of Chinese language web properties and proprietary search engines, consisting of seven web properties:

- www.sohu.com, a mass portal and online media destination;
- www.17173.com, a games information portal;
- www.focus.cn, a real estate Web site;
- www.chinaren.com, an online alumni club, and

The Company operates two massively multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPG games), Tian Long Ba Bu (TLBB) and Blade Online (BO) (http://www.google.com/finance?q=sohu and http://corp.sohu.com)

Both sources confirm that Sohu is a Chinese company and Sohu is ranked as a top-ten U.S.-listed Chinese stock. The mystery is that Sohu was originally registered in Delaware, U.S. A. That is why it has to file as a domestic company, therefore, a 10-K
according to the SEC stipulated rules. However, because its business is completely in China, it is considered as a foreign company in the U.S.

Sohu.com entered the U.S. stock market in July 2000. Currently its stocks are listed on NASDAQ with the stock code as SOHU.

**Baidu**

The grounded theory approach allows me to collect new data after data analysis started. Baidu’s annual reports were collected to complement the study of Sohu. They are peers when it comes to search engines. The mission of Baidu is to “provide the best way for people to find information” using Chinese language search (http://www.baidu.com).

Baidu is very proud of its poetic company name. Baidu, whose literal meaning is hundreds of times, represents a persistent search for the ideal. According to the Baidu story, “Baidu” was inspired by a poem written more than 800 years ago during the Song Dynasty. The poem compares the search for a retreating beauty amid chaotic glamour with the search for one's dream while confronted by life's many obstacles “…hundreds and thousands of times, for her I searched in chaos, suddenly, I turned by chance, to where the lights were waning, and there she stood.” (http://baidu.com).
Baidu.com entered the U.S. stock market in August 2005. Currently its stocks are listed on NASDAQ with the stock code as BIDU (http://ir.baidu.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=188488&p=irol-faq)

Interview

An investor relations manager from a NASDAQ listed company with blue chip status was interviewed to provide an expert understanding of the broader context of annual reports of these U.S.-listed Chinese stock companies. This IR manager is a senior industry/market analyst and a specialist in Pre-IPO (initial public offering). The IR managers from both Sohu and Sinopec were contacted by phone and via email. Both answered my inquiries in a friendly and informative way.

Contextual and Visual Analyses

Contextual analysis

The stock market does not have a long history in China. On July 15, 1993, Tsingtao Brewery Company Limited was listed (0168) on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and became the first Chinese company to be publicly traded outside China, which started the trend for Chinese companies to go outside China to seek broader markets to generate funds for further development. By June 2008, there were around 200 Chinese companies listed on US stock exchanges, mostly the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), OTCBB, and NASDAQ though over half of them do not directly trade on the

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4 A nationally recognized, well-established and financially sound company. Blue chips generally sell high-quality, widely accepted products and services. Blue chip companies are known to weather downturns and operate profitably in the face of adverse economic conditions, which helps to contribute to their long record of stable and reliable growth. The name "blue chip" came about because in the game of poker the blue chips have the highest value. (http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bluechip.asp)
stock exchange. From 1993 on, Chinese companies have undergone a four-phase
development of entering the U.S. capital market through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs),
American Depository Receipts (ADRs), and other modes, from manufacturing to
infrastructure to red-chip (“China Concept⁵”) to high-tech.
(http://www.ce.cn/securities/zhengquanzt/zgqyhwssclcq/mgmdxyl/200601/17/t20060117
_5857548.shtml0

Each government has its own financial reporting policies and accounting
principles. Chinese companies listed on a Chinese stock exchange may produce annual
reports that have different requirements from Chinese companies listed on a U.S. stock
exchange. The U.S. financial reporting system and accounting principles are much more
detailed and much stricter. For example, the SEC requires a company to report how it
perceives its market competitiveness and how management projects its future prospects.
For non-U.S. companies, it is a challenge to comply with SEC reporting requirements,
especially after the passage of the SOX Act in 2002 in response to a number of major
corporate and accounting scandals including those affecting Enron, Tyco International,
and WorldCom (now MCI). These scandals resulted in a decline of public trust in
accounting and reporting practices. The changes to the annual report according to this Act

⁵ The stock of a company whose assets or earnings have significant activities in China. China concepts
stocks will trade on different stock exchanges such as the Hong Kong exchange, under the name of H-
Shares or "red chip" stocks. The People's Republic of China is undergoing major financial transformation,
so many leading mainland-based companies chose to list themselves elsewhere to gain access to investor
capital as quickly as possible. Beginning in 1980, the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) started opening up
to joint ventures with foreign companies. China is developing capital markets of its own to attract foreign
funds; they have even taken part in the some of the biggest initial public offerings in history as they
transition large state-run businesses into publicly-traded companies
include issues such as auditor independence, corporate governance, and enhanced financial disclosure. Despite this challenge, Chinese companies which do not want to lose the opportunity to benefit from the huge U.S. capital market decide to “do as the Romans do.”

**Visual analysis**

In the visual analysis section, I discuss the visual features of annual reports from Sinopec and Sohu before 2001 (pre-WTO) and those from Sinopec, Sohu, and Baidu after 2001 (post-WTO). Although my research discussed the historical comparison of annual reports in two historical periods (pre-WTO and post-WTO), I focused on the current practice of annual reports because one key research question was to generate features of annual report writing in the global context.

**Visual analysis of annual reports before 2001 (Pre-WTO)**

In the following, I describe the Sinopec 2000 annual report and the Sohu 2001 annual report. Both reports were accessed from the companies’ Web sites.

**Sinopec 2000 annual report**

Sinopec’s annual report won the “Best Annual Report Award” a number of times for the following reasons: first, it contains all regulatory information; second, it is listed on four stock exchanges (Shanghai, Hongkong, NYSE, and London) and addresses a much broader audience; third, its layout stands out. Unlike most companies that either provide only 20-F or use a CEO letter in front of a 20-F, Sinopec deliberately designs an annual report each year for its shareholders. Though the SEC has removed the requirements for listing companies to send shareholders a hard copy of its annual report,
Sinopec still produces a number of hard copies. In recent years, there has been a decrease in people requesting a hard copy. However, once any shareholder sends a request, the Sinopec IR office mails a hard copy. In the past, Sinopec relied on outside resources to produce its annual report. It used to be very costly to produce and deliver the annual reports. Now, everything is done in house though it may take around two months each year in preparing the annual report (Z. Fang, personal communication, June 18, 2010).

Sinopec’s first annual report came out in 2001 and it can be accessed on the Sinopec IR Web page. Quite different from all other annual reports posted on this page, the 2000 annual report is the only one that is contained in a zipped folder (see figure 5.2). This folder does not provide any navigation assistance to readers as to the document title. The only option is to open each file to learn what that document contains. This user-unfriendliness makes it difficult to search for a particular section to read.
Once it is unzipped, a total of 14 individual PDFs appear and they are arranged in the following order (see table 5.1)
Table 5.1 Sohu 2000 annual report table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Headings</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Company profile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial highlight</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chairman’s statement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Business review and prospects</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Management’s discussion and analysis</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Disclosure of significant events</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Report of the board of directors</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Report of the supervisory committee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Directors, supervisors, and senior management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Connected transactions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Notice of annual general meeting</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Report of the international auditors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Corporate information</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Documents for inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sohu 2001 Annual Report

For this study, I chose Sohu’s 2001 annual report because its 2000 annual report was only an SEC filing with no CEO letter. The 2001 Sohu annual report as posted on its Web site is a 90-page-long PDF document. There is no cover page or any other type of identifying information. The entire document is printed in black-white and no color scheme can be seen. Aside from the lack of identifying information, the 2001 Sohu annual report does not provide any navigation tool for readers to get a sense of what it is all about. The only option readers have is to scroll down and browse page by page, which could be very challenging and frustrating for novice readers of annual reports, for example, future investors. This user-unfriendliness usually does not impress a reader and
may, as a consequence, lead readers losing interest in the company because oftentimes an annual report is considered as the medium to showcase a corporate culture. It may hurt Sohu more than any other business because Sohu claims to be “the leading Internet portal in China” with “sophisticated navigational and search capabilities” as we read in its 2001 annual report. The following screenshot shows what its Website says about the unique features of its navigation

*Home Page and Navigational Context*

Our portal is organized around the Sohu.com home page and the central feature of our home page is our online directory.

*Online Directory.* Our online directory was designed and has been continuously refined to reflect the unique cultural characteristics and thinking and viewing habits of PRC Internet users. We are the first site in China to introduce manual Web classification, and Chinese Web site classification remains one of our key strengths. As of December 31, 2001, our directory contained over 300,000 Chinese language Web listings under the following 18 principal categories:

However, a reading of its annual report does not persuade us to believe that it could deliver that promise.

The CEO’s letter is a bit shy of two and a half pages. It starts with “TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS.” All three words are in capital letters and are in boldface in order to catch reader’s attention, or at least to tell readers what this page is about. There is no punctuation at the end of these three words. The tone of such a greeting is plain, showing no enthusiasm, or the willingness to engage and connect with shareholders. It may leave readers an impression that this company is not friendly and trying to keep a distance between the company and its shareholders (company owners). The letter ends with the CEO’s name, Charles Zhang, and his title: CEO, President and Chairman of Sohu.com Inc. There is no complimentary closing or his signature.
Despite the relatively smaller font size (10 or 11 point), the letter uses serif font (Times New Roman), which is most familiar to readers at that time. In addition, the letter uses both a numbered list and a bulleted list, which chunks information and makes it easy to read. In this sense, it fits the features of online writing, making it consistent with the products of the company. The subheadings (management performance, industry leadership, dynamic market, diversified revenue model, and proven strategic direction towards profitability) are all in bold and there is enough white space between the heading and the content, which makes the heading stand out. There is also an alternating of long paragraphs (about six lines) and short paragraphs (one simple sentence of seven words).

**Visual analysis of annual reports after 2002 (Post-WTO)**

The annual reports analyzed here are the Sinopec 2008 and 2009 annual reports, the Sohu 2008 and 2009 annual reports, and the Baidu 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 annual reports. All these reports were accessed from these three companies’ Web sites and I also have a hard copy of Baidu’s 2009 annual report. Both Sinopec and Sohu have had ten years’ experience in designing this important document used between the company and its current shareholders and potential investors. Compared with annual reports I analyzed before 2002, I used more samples here not only to show the most recent design trends in the annual report but also to examine the continuity of the design.

**Sinopec 2008 and 2009 annual reports design**

Both the 2008 Sinopec annual report and the 2009 Sinopec annual report demonstrate an effort made by Sinopec in attracting its shareholders and future investors by adopting an open and inviting annual report layout and substantial content. Due to the
lack of access to a hard copy, I omit discussing the paper quality and the binding of the annual reports. The cover bears the Sinopec logo and company name in both Chinese and English on the top left corner ( ). The document title appears at the bottom left corner with three stock codes\(^6\) underneath it in parenthesis. The format of the cover and the report is basically the same for both 2008 and 2009. The only difference lies in the color of the cover, changing from goldenish-yellow in 2008 to yellowish-green in 2009. A simple design like this makes the document uncluttered, inviting, with the text standing out, soliciting readership. The cover design remaining unchanged might result from a content management system used at Sinopec. It has practical benefits as well, such as reducing cost in designing and producing cover pages and saving production time for early delivery. In the case of Sinopec, its annual reports have been available in late March each year, three months ahead of the SEC deadline. Maintaining the layout may also suggest that the company wishes to create a sense of stability, which is a very important message that the company wants to send to its audiences when many companies worldwide are experiencing a minor economic crisis.

In contrast to the overall inviting, user-friendly, accessible layout of its annual report in 2008 and 2009, the CEO’s letters are presented in a very old-fashioned style. The 2008 letter is four pages long while the 2009 letter is two pages long and they are presented in three columns on each page. A headshot of the Sinopec CEO is displayed above the letter on the left with his name and title as caption. The 2008 photo is a front

\(^6\) A share, H share, and ADR
head shot of a well-groomed, friendly, and smiling CEO. The 2009 photo is a front head shot at a slight angle with an approachable and smiling CEO looking directly at readers. The two photos are of the same size and treated in the same way. The photo occupies two columns and leaves enough white space for readers to communicate with the CEO.

The CEO’s letter in the 2008 and 2009 reports is not designed in any particular way to encourage readers to interact. With a block style, the letter uses no heading or sub-heading, or lists to ease the navigation. No content is treated for emphasis. The only two places where boldface is used are the salutation “Dear Shareholders:” and the CEO name and signature at the very end. Most paragraphs are very long. For example, the second paragraph in the 2008 report contains 60 lines. Unfortunately, without any visual features, the text-heavy letter makes scanning extremely difficult, overshadowing the overall design quality of these reports. The letter printed in dense type, with little white space, no visual aids, and long paragraphs may signal that the company is confident that readers will take the time and use a magnifier to study and digest the text. The only promising sign of change is that the 2009 letter is half the length of the 2008 one.

Sohu 2008 and 2009 annual reports design

The major difference between the Sohu annual reports before 2002 and after is the cover page. Finally, it is showing that a high-tech company is willing to demonstrate some innovation and change by utilizing computer graphics techniques. The 2008 Sohu report has an eye-catching cover page design (see Appendix). The centerpiece of this page is an almost full-sized Olympic gold medal, the medal part replacing the letter “o” in Sohu, as if the company is personalized and awarded a precious gold medal by the
International Olympic Committee (IOC) for its brilliant performance. To match the color of the gold medal with a ring of jade in the middle, the company name is also in the color of gold. Crossing the hanging ribbon is the name of the company as well as the document title. The company tagline “enjoy every click” (in script font, orange color) appears above the letter H and U in the middle of the page toward the right side. The entire background is Chinese red with hue of propitious clouds, the core design of the Olympic torch. Such a cover design connects well with and prepares for the design on the inside page.

The inside page is composed of two parts: image and text. The image of the lighted Olympic torch is centered and occupies two-thirds of the page while the remaining one-third has text in two columns. The heading “unrivaled competitive advantage” is much larger than the body text. Both use san-serif font. The sharp contrast of the red background and the white text not only increases the readability, but also makes the texts stand much closer to readers’ eyes.

The CEO’s letter is two pages long. The salutation “Dear Shareholders,” the five headings, and the CEO name and title are emphasized by using boldface, much larger font size than that of body text, and generous use of white space around the headings. The entire letter uses the familiar serif font. The longest paragraph occupies ten lines. There is a numbered list for a snapshot of important metrics. Mostly it compares revenue and net income between 2008 and the previous year 2007. The information is presented in sentence format.
The same design pattern and red-gold-white color scheme is repeated for the cover of the 2009 Sohu report. The company name and the document title “2009 annual report” do stand out. The left bottom corner shows a spinning globe with shining connecting points. However, the entire page leaves the impression that the image and the text are not well integrated.

The inside page has a unique design with three parts. The background color is blue. From the very top to the middle, there is an image with traditional bookshelves full of books of various sizes in a very spacious and well-lit place with shining wood floor. Most bookshelves stand on the left side. The source of light is from the right though we can see neither windows nor lamps. There are 15 oval-shaped call-out boxes of various sizes, each with several interesting contemporary Chinese expressions or idioms. All the call-out boxes point to a place in the shelves as if these expressions are quoted from the books they are pointing to. A close reading of these expressions suggests that most of them would be hard to find in books as they are newly coined expressions. As a native speaker of Chinese who has lived far away from mainland China for a few years, fully understanding these idioms can be a challenge. I know all the words listed on this page, however, I could not figure out the meaning of three phrases.

Besides the image, there is a Sogou search box underneath the image. An arrow connects the search box with the image and we also see the advertising slogan “The Sogou input Concentrates Wisdom of Whole Web User.” Below the search box, there is an introduction about Sogou pinyin, the leading Chinese input method software. White text, sans-serif font, and blue background make it easy to read.
The CEO’s letter is a tiny bit shorter than the 2008 letter. The salutation “Dear Shareholders,” four headings, and the CEO name and title are the only places where emphasis is given. The word “our” is used 29 times on the two pages. No place in this annual report can show us that computer technology is transforming our daily life, which ironically, indicates that high-tech companies may not rely on graphics.

The following summarizes the comparison of visual design in the annual reports before 2001 and after 2001 from the two Chinese companies used for this study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>company name</th>
<th>Sinopec</th>
<th>Sohu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ownership</td>
<td>state-owned</td>
<td>privately-run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
<td>traditional</td>
<td>high-tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. stock exchange</td>
<td>NYSE (SNP) since 2000</td>
<td>Nasdaq (SOHU) since 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>before WTO</td>
<td>after WTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical look of annual report</td>
<td>a zipped folder</td>
<td>one document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annual report length</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cover page</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>image use</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>text/image integration</td>
<td>separate</td>
<td>integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>color scheme</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>pastel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company logo</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization/navigation</td>
<td>14 parts</td>
<td>19 parts with TOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO letter length</td>
<td>4 pages</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter format</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photo use</td>
<td>half a page</td>
<td>2-inch head shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>font type, size</td>
<td>sans-serif, 11 point</td>
<td>sans-serif, 10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readability</td>
<td>no special treatment</td>
<td>no special treatment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3 comparison of visual designs before and after WTO from two Chinese companies

_Baidu annual reports from 2005-2009_

Before I start this section, recall that Baidu’s annual reports will not be analyzed in the same manner as the annual reports from both Sinopec and Sohu. Following the grounded theory protocol, I’m using Baidu to test saturation.

Baidu’s annual reports from 2005 to 2009 appeal to readers because they combine computer graphics, photography, and Chinese images to reinforce the innovation and change of a Chinese high-tech company. Although the overall length of annual reports in
the five year varies from 144 pages to 231 pages, the pattern for cover page design remains the same, consisting of an image, the Baidu logo, and the document title (for example, 2005 Annual Report). The fonts for the document title in 2005 and 2006 are different; however, it has been using the same font since 2007 for the title. In the first three years, Baidu used three different taglines on the cover, “focus, starts with good vision” for 2005, “simple and focused, striving for excellence” for 2006, and “confidence and focus, vision for the future” for 2007, but there is no tagline for either 2008 or 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>baidu annual reports</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>report length (pages)</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic components</td>
<td>cover page +20-F</td>
<td>cover page +20-F</td>
<td>cover page +20-F</td>
<td>cover page +20-F</td>
<td>cover page +20-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional content</td>
<td>TOC; CEO’s letter; CEO’s letter+visuals; Q&amp;A; Meet our users; leadership; corp. info</td>
<td>CEO’s letter</td>
<td>CEO’s letter</td>
<td>CEO’s letter</td>
<td>CEO’s letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company logo</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images used (excluding cover)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>length of CEO’s letter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.4 a visual comparison of Baidu annual reports from 2005-2009

The CEO’s letter in the 2005-2009 Baidu reports vary greatly in length, from three to eight pages. Different from the text font used in the 20-F, the letter used the same sans-serif font and size since 2005, with the same salutation “Dear Baidu shareholders.” The letter format stays consistent, especially in 2007, 2008, and 2009. Starting from 2007, using a modified block letter style, the letter was composed of three parts: introduction, business highlights or key developments as the body, and conclusion. Both the introduction and conclusion parts are presented on a page using one column while the body section uses a two-column design with headings in boldface and in blue.
Unlike the letters in the other two companies printed in dense type, Baidu’s CEO’s letters are visually inviting because enough white space is used so that the page does not look crowded. Each subsection is treated with same importance without being constrained by the column space. The unconventional design evokes the contemporary and fast-moving Internet culture. Baidu is certainly on top of the latest trends in design.

Its 2005 annual report demonstrates great efforts made by the company in promoting itself and introducing a new Chinese company to American investors. The report starts with a well-designed fast fact sheet to decode Baidu: its history, its business, its user base and customers, as well as its main achievement. The page does not use “about us;” however, it uses clear and concise language to provide a comprehensive and complete description of this company. The clarity and conciseness tells readers what the company is about. In addition to the CEO’s letter, the introductory part of the 2005 Baidu report also includes a Q&A with two chief Baidu officers Robin and Shawn. In terms of textual choices, it is first name-based. Visually, it uses computer technology to cut a picture so that it blends well with the text or uses text to wrap the picture. Following the Q&A section, the report moves to a section when Baidu’s users are introduced. The report showcases three real users with their real name, age, job title, and a brief explanation how they use Baidu for their work or entertainment purposes. Each picture takes a whole page from edge to edge. The generous space the report gives to each user, twice or four times more than it gives to its CEO or founders, indicates to readers that the company cares more about its users—the basis of an Internet company. The leadership section gives readers a chance to meet the five executive officers with
their pictures, name (first name), position, and a one-sentence quote from them on Baidu in 2005. They are all male, looking very young, and energetic. Only two are in formal business attire (suit + tie) while the third is in a polo shirt, the fourth in crew neck sweater, and the fifth in vest. Their postures suggest that they are a good team, easily approachable, and friendly. The visual and textual choices for this report establish the power of this new promising Internet company that is courageous in breaking conventions, and experimenting with new rules.

Much of the visual interest is in the changes report designers used in treating the text and images in each report from separation in 2005 to full integration in 2009. The change happens gradually. In the 2005 report, the inside page contains a full color image on the very top and a brief message in the middle to explain what “focus” means to Baidu. Pages later, before the section on the 20-F, another page is devoted to continue the explanation of “focus.” This time an image of an old Chinese marketplace is introduced. The entire report design gives me the impression that the two images are standing-alone, as two decorative book ends, to hold the report in the middle. The 2006 report follows the same design pattern. Between the cover page and the CEO’s letter, a whole page is given to an image of a Chinese teapot and a Chinese character, and a brief analogy of teapot and online experience.
After the CEO’s letter, three more pages are allotted for images. The tagline for 2006 also enjoys the privilege of having the full page. These uses of images not only introduce Chinese traditional culture to American readers, but also reinforce the idea that Baidu “wants the world to remember its [Chinese] heritage” (the Baidu story).
Simple and focused, striving for excellence

上
(shang)
Vast, broad.
Just as a godfish swims freely
in a grand expanse of water,
Baidu too explores the boundless potential
of the internet industry.

The same effort in introducing Chinese culture can be seen in the 2007 report.
Instead of using a separate page for the image alone, this time the image was introduced
to partially fill the white space at the end of each section in the letter.

欲穷千里目，更上一层楼
To see great distances, one must climb to great heights
Zhihuan Wang(688–742), Tang Dynasty
The couplet cited in this image was from a poem by a Tang Dynasty poet. To assist readers in appreciating and understanding this poem, the English translation of this couplet is provided along with an illustrative image. The letter is talking about growth and the poem is about going up, however, no place in the letter can we find a direct reference. The association is only implied through a Chinese culture-specific artifact.

The relationship between text and image is becoming more visible in the 2008 report. Earlier I mentioned that since 2007, Baidu’s reports have been using a two-column design for the body. In the 2008 report, a total of six goldfish images are used, from two fish looking above on the cover, to a school of fish moving forward, to two fish attempting to jump, and one bigger fish way above the other two fish. Set in motion, these images vividly tell a story of how a goldfish enjoys swimming freely in water. Actually it implies that a young company like Baidu enjoys exploring the boundless potential of the Internet industry. Using the image of goldfish in the 2008 report shows continuity by echoing the last image used in the 2006 report. On most pages, the fish image is shown at the end of a section to fill the space except on page four when the entire left column is dedicated to an image while the right column is used for text. If we agree that the image in the 2007 report is to supplement the text, to fill the blank, then the image in the 2008 report is to complement the text.

Integrating image into text can be seen not only from the cover page design of the 2009 report, but also on inside pages. A text bar in the 2009 annual report cuts through the image of phoenix. Four phoenix images are used in this report, each of which is unique and in motion. It seems to remind us of this Internet company that is unique, fast
moving, and flexible. Instead of putting these phoenixes on a separate page, or letting them share a page with text, two phoenixes on the first page and second page of the letter were set as background for the text. This is the first time that we have seen a direct connection between the image (phoenix) and the text (Phoenix Nest—the name for the new online marketing platform).

I am not sure where the inspiration for this name is from. I tend to connect this name with the “Bird’s Nest” which is the colloquial name for the Beijing National Stadium built for and used during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. According to Chinese mythology, the phoenix collects wood and burns itself to death in order to regain power for rebirth every 500 years. That’s why it is also called “firebird” or “bird of eternity”.

Improving our customers’ ability to reach their target audience

During the year we successfully rolled out Phoenix Nest, one of our most anticipated initiatives. This new and highly sophisticated online marketing platform gives customers a greater choice of keywords, more data to understand keyword performance, more tools to manage and target marketing budgets, and ultimately, a superior return on investment. Moreover, it benefits users by improving their search experience as it increases the relevancy of paid search results through an advanced keyword-matching mechanism. We introduced Phoenix Nest in April 2009, backed by a strong customer outreach program, and seeing that customer acceptance was high, on December 1st we completed the transition from our previous online marketing system, the Classic Edition. This was a well

Alongside Phoenix Nest and our Baidu Union business, we have introduced a raft of additional initiatives to improve customer and partner experience, such as Baidu Statistics, an advanced tool which allows customers to track and analyze site traffic to improve conversion, and Baidu Site Ad Manager, a tool available to Baidu Union members and website owners and publishers, which helps them manage their media inventories. We also rolled out a standardized CRM system in the second quarter to improve customer satisfaction and sales efficiency.
The reborn phoenix is more beautiful and more powerful.
(http://www.hudong.com/wiki/%E5%87%A4%E5%87%B0). To ground my assumption in facts, I “googled” and “baidued” the major Baidu events in 2008 and 2009. The Phoenix Nest is Baidu’s new search engine advertising program, aiming to replace the profitable but controversial Baidu Bidding Rank that has been used to display the advertising Web sites on its search results page. The replacement was a response to the continuous criticism from the public about the ethics of its search results. China’s national TV station CCTV exposed Baidu’s Bidding Tank for “promoting fake medicine information, which led to the decrease of its share price by up to USD46.9, a drop of 26.22% and a historic low since May 2007” (Baidu launches phoenix nest professional on April 20). Baidu hoped that the Phoenix Nest program would recover its reputation among Chinese netizens. Using phoenix as its name and also using it on its annual report, Baidu is sending the message to its users, customers, and investors that they could trust the “reborn” Baidu which is more powerful and more beautiful (more secure).

What I have learned about the new management team after most old executive officers left the company makes me also think that it might be another reason why phoenix is used for this year (Baidu announces management change). A “reborn” company with new programs and a new management team would bring Baidu to a new historic height.

It is challenging to find this kind of match in terms of a perfect fit for both the literal and implied meanings. No doubt, the full integration of text and image used in the 2009 Baidu report brought document design to a new level. The company that is
innovative, optimistic, and flexible in creating new conventions and new rules that could impress readers and potential investors.

**Textual Analysis and Coding**


**Initial coding**

I started my first-round coding with open coding of the 2001 Sohu CEO’s letter by following a line-by-line coding protocol as suggested by Charmaz (2006). Based on the textual commonalities of this letter, I identified several possible concepts and their properties and dimensions. I then coded the letter in the 2000 Sinopec report. The goal was to see if there would be any difference in what to report to investors across industries before 2002 (a traditional, state-owned company vs. an emerging Internet business with foreign investment) by comparing codes. I also followed Glaser and Strauss’ constant comparison analysis protocol to compare codes from one letter with concepts generated from the other. The same process was repeated. After comparing codes with concepts, I then compared concepts with concepts. After the constant comparison of all concepts, I organized the concepts by recurring themes in these two letters (see table). I then linked those concepts that are associated with each other to form categories. This process of
iterative examination of the letters produced a set of categories and concepts that are associated with the CEOs’ letters before 2002.

Table 5.2 Emergence of concepts from the codes in the 2001 Sohu data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Codes from the CEO's letter in the 2001 Sohu annual report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>to our shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlighting achievements in 2001</td>
<td>solid financial performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>brand monetization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>all-time high user numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledging management performance</td>
<td>committing to profitability via sustainable growth and spending control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accomplishing the goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monetizing household brand name and massive Internet user population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attracting new users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outlining a roadmap to profitability in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leading in performance and business strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledging employees</td>
<td>admitting that corporate success would not have been possible without employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>noticing high morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>working together to make Sohu a world-class company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reporting finance</td>
<td>revenues up 117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ad revenue by 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-advertising services up from 5% to 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14% narrowing of pro forma net loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leading in industry</td>
<td>dominating web portal in the world's most populous country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>having the largest registered user base in China (43 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achieving a household name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>topping the list on Internet usage in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ranking the most visited portal in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expecting a dynamic market</td>
<td>an established medium for the urban youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>potential to use Internet as a marketing platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>predicting more future users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>growing IT industry will expand the use of the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compelling marketing conditions (China's entry into WTO, 2002 World Cup, 2008 Olympic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversifying revenue model</td>
<td>advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>business use Sohu's E-marketing services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expanding services to SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consumers use Sohu's E-commerce services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consumers use Sohu's E-subscriptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
setting objectives for the next year

- be pro forma EBITDA positive in Q4, 2002
- expand enterprise client base
- broaden paid services for consumers
- be strongly focused on wireless strategy
- entrench position as China's leading online news provider

concluding

- expressing deepest appreciation to employees

Table 5.3 Emergence of concepts from the codes in the 2000 Sinopec data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Codes from the CEO's letter in the 2000 Sinopec annual report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>to all shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introducing Sinopec</td>
<td>giving the official name of the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing the date when the company was established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explaining what the company does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>highlighting when and where the company is listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reporting finance</td>
<td>turnover and other operating revenue up by 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>earnings up by 306%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>basic and diluted earnings per share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return on capital employed (ROCE) doubled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proposing a final dividend of RMB 0.08 per share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>thanking employee for impressive growth in 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reducing costs by laying off employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calling for employees' professional ethics and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlighting challenges in 2000</td>
<td>world crude oil and refined products prices fluctuated in an unprecedented wide range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the pricing system in China for refined products exerted pressure upon its earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the difference between the international market price and the low domestic product prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explaining solutions</td>
<td>intensifying its exploration initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improving its reserve replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>increasing its sour crude processing capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>purchasing multiple types of crude oil from various sources through diversified channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>centralizing the decision-making process for its capital expenditure plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acquiring well-positioned storage facilities and petrol stations to expand its retail volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government involvement</td>
<td>lobbying the State Development and Planning Commission to stipulate a retail guidance prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reporting achievements in four segments

developing reserves
expanding its sour crude processing capacity
capturing domestic retail market
revamping and expanding a number of chemical facilities

strengthening and expanding foreign cooperation

developing partnership with MNCs
establishing joint-venture business
preparing for more cooperation
bringing technological and managerial expertise from foreign companies

maximizing ROCE in 2001

expanding resources
expanding markets
reducing costs
disciplining capital spending

promoting a new corporate culture

practicing a management philosophy of competition and openness
employing a business strategy of expanding markets and resources, reducing costs to maximize profitability
achieving an operating goal of maximizing ROI and shareholders' return
using an operating mechanism of market-oriented external operation and synergistic internal operation
following an operating principle of standardization, discipline and integrity
creating an incentive system of encouraging self-motivation through proper reward

setting the goal for the next year

meeting the operating targets
becoming a world-class integrated energy and chemical company
bringing stable and sustained growth in returns to its shareholders

Concluding

extending appreciation to employees
extending appreciation to shareholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Codes from the CEO's letter in the 2009 Sohu annual report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>dear shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlighting achievements in 2001</td>
<td>continuing growth of portal and online game business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>successful IPO of changyou.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledging management performance</td>
<td>successfully executing business strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>delivering solid financial results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Emergence of concepts from the codes in the 2009 Sohu data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Finance</th>
<th>enhancing value for shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total revenue up 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>balance sheet remaining free of debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cash balance over $560 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading in Industry</td>
<td>ranking the third fastest growing U.S. listed company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>winning Triple A Regional Award for best ADR equity deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leading mainstream media platform in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leading Internet company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicting a gloomy economic environment</td>
<td>challenging economic condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a particularly difficult time in the global capital market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soft economic climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in challenging market conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>as the economy marches toward recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding the Portal Business</td>
<td>offering differentiated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expanding user base by battling online video piracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>increasing advertising revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>partnering with leading local and global media companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>increasing the mobile version of Sogou Pinyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attracting more users to the Sohu platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>installing Sogou Pinyin on 80% of PCs in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Online Games</td>
<td>successful IPO of changyou.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enhancing user experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>growing user base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continuing success in existing games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>developing a diverse pipeline of games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generating record return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaffirming Vision</td>
<td>relating continuing growth and development of online game business to strategic vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demonstrating the success of long-term strategic vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding</td>
<td>thanking shareholders for support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focused coding**

After completing the open coding, I selected what seem to be the most useful initial codes from the first three CEO’s letters before 2002 and after and tested them against data collected from both Sinopec and Baidu. The reading of the CEO’s letters in this focused coding was guided by the initial concepts. This process followed the
constant comparative analysis method of Grounded theory as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). To do so, I compared these letters with three letters used in the initial coding process.

I first compared data with codes. The letters used in focused coding were first sorted into the initial concepts generated by the first three letters used in the initial coding. It did not take long to notice that the initial concepts could not accommodate some of the findings from the letters in the second group. Next, I compared codes with codes. New codes this time were given special attention so that they could be added to the initial concepts. These new codes include global financial crisis, intense market competition, and structural adjustment.

I then applied these new codes to the first three letters by resorting and reanalyzing them. Once again, this process of adding new concepts and reanalyzing the data showed the strength of a grounded theory research approach.

During the focused coding process when codes were compared with each other, I found higher order commonality, which grounded theorists often called “concepts,” derived from the codes. For example, the concept of “contributing to the community” was new. The fake ranking scandal in 2008 and 2009 hurt Baidu’s business image greatly. To rescue its reputation, Baidu leveraged its brand, technology platform and large base of users and partners to help the community in China and worldwide. These community efforts included helping farmers selling oranges, promoting local handicrafts in the earthquake affected areas, making donations to victims of the Haiti earthquake and Taiwan Typhoon Morakot, and donating books and school supplies to rural areas. In the
2009 Sinopec data, four new concepts, in addition to the initial concepts, emerged in this phase, including expanding overseas, attaching importance to social and environmental issues to ensure sustainable development, participating in public welfare activities, and improving corporate governance.

**Theoretical Saturation and Sorting**

Using what Glaser and Strauss called the “constant comparative method,” I compared each concept in turn with all other concepts from three companies. Since some concepts showed commonalities, I grouped them into categories by analyzing the codes, concepts, and studying and sorting my memos.

**Emergence of categories**

By comparing each concept in turn, I found a common theme among the following concepts: highlighting achievements and reporting finance. Because they share the theme of reporting financial information and persuading readers with numbers, I consider this as the first category that emerged from the data. The following diagram demonstrates the formation of this category.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 5.5 diagrammatical emergence of the category "reporting financial information with numbers"*

In order to persuade shareholders that the company has achieved greatly over the year, CEOs often describe the environment the companies were in, such as external political and economic situations, to imply that they were able to overcome the challenges. The second new category emerged from the data and is diagrammatically presented in Figure 5.6.
Highlighting challenges
Explaining solutions
Lobbying government
Depicting gloomy economic environment
Expect a dynamic market

Figure 5.6 diagrammatic emergence of the category “environmental factors”

To boast achievement, Chinese companies have a tendency of using the superlative degree of adjectives and stress all sorts of rankings to indicate the leadership position the company has achieved in a particular industry and/or a geographical region. This is the third category.

Leading in industry
Leading in an area
Ranking used in the US

Figure 5.7 diagrammatical emergence of the category "leadership and ranking"

Developing new products, new lines of business, building alliances, partnerships, improving technology, announcing and updating products, and projects show that the company is expanding and expansion needs improvement of infrastructure. As companies are using the annual report as a marketing tool, this expansion category surely has a place to stay.

Strengthening and expanding foreign cooperation
Expanding portal business
Developing online game

Figure 5.8 diagrammatical emergence of the category "business expansion"

The annual report serves multiple audiences, existing shareholders, future investors, financial analysts, employees, and management. To make the letter widely acceptable, CEOs often express their appreciation, gratitude, and thanks in the letters.
Acknowledging management and their contributions
Expressing gratitude toward employees
Thanking shareholders

Figure 5.9 diagrammatical emergence of the category "showing appreciation"

Emergence of categories from the focused coding

Concepts derived from the 2000 Sinopec data were first used to analyze the 2009 Sinopec data. The concept “introducing Sinopec” had no support from this data analysis because by 2009 Sinopec has been on the NYSE for over nine years. It is possible there is a large number of existing shareholders. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to introduce Sinopec’s history to its readers any more. On the other hand, these concepts were not enough to accommodate and explain all the data. New concepts emerged as improving corporate governance, oversea expansion, attaching importance to social and environmental issues, which added further substance leading to substantive theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967).

Not only concepts, but also categories were applied to the 2009 Sinopec letter and Baidu letters in order to discover new categories. As a result, among the list of emerging categories, we can find two new categories.

Attaching importance to social and environmental issues
Contributing to community
Carrying out employee-focused programs

Figure 5.10 diagrammatical emergence of the category "social responsibility"

Expanding overseas markets
Expanding the scope of operation—Japanese search engine

Figure 5.11 diagrammatical emergence of the category "internationalizing"
Sorting Memos, Diagramming, and Generating Theory

Memo writing is inseparable from ground theory study. I started with the design aspect of the annual reports, such as the cover page design, photo use, graphics, logo, and so on. When analyzing the content of the CEO’s letters, I jotted down memos on reporting financial information especially when it comes to visual display, compliance with SEC requirements and the SOX act in 2002, China’s accession to the WTO, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the rhetorical choices CEOs made. In the process of sorting my memos and reviewing the categories, I begin to see the relationships between the categories. Following is a diagram showing all categories and their relationships of the annual reports from China-based U.S.-listed companies before 2002.
Figure 5.12 Emergent categories from annual report data before 2002
A comparison of figure 5.12 and figure 5.13 shows that in general the annual report contents remain the same while three new categories appear in the 2009 reports as indicated in deep blue in figure 5.13. Lord (2001) conducted a literature review of annual reports from 1988-2001 and she predicted that articles would spring especially on companies’ compliance with the 2002 SOX Act. The new category “improving corporate governance” proved her prediction. In addition to compliance with SEC and the SOX Act, annual reports in 2009 have demonstrated other new features in terms of content:
internationalization and social responsibility. Companies are creating a new image as a responsible international player in the world market. In the letters, they demonstrate their global citizenship by caring not just for their direct constituents, but a much larger community worldwide.

In the following discussion section, I examine cultural motives and cultural context in the hope that they might assist us in understanding the current features of annual reports of U.S.-listed Chinese companies.

**Discussion**

The two diagrams above mostly answered my first research question about the features of annual report writing in China. This discussion section focuses on a comparative study of annual reports of U.S.-listed Chinese companies before and after WTO and relates the salient features to cultural contexts and cultural motives. The comparisons are presented in this order: company identity; document design; engaging with readers/investors; persuasive strategies; the use of numbers; political and cultural environments; and compliance.

**Company identity and corporate profile**

For individual American investors to learn about an international company before they make an investment decision, oftentimes they would research the company Web site. Representing a company on the Internet is one of a Web site's most important jobs. It explains the company's purpose and what it stands for so that it provides essential support for any of the site's other goals. Usability testing expert Jakob Nielson conducted user testing of Web sites run by 63 organizations in 2003 to find out how users find and
interpret Web site profiles of companies and organizations. Unfortunately, most Web sites do a poor job of communicating the crucial information it should contain. Nielson conducted the second round of testing five years later and found that “companies and organizations still can’t explain what they do in one paragraph” (Nielsen, 2008). He suggested that companies use scannable, concise, and plainspoken exposition for their company overview and “about us.” I think this principle should also apply to Chinese companies when they present themselves both on the Internet and through their annual reports.

Both Sinopec and Baidu have consistently used their logos on the cover page of their annual reports. Baidu seems to be able to keep its “focus” which can be seen in several reports since 2005. Baidu always stresses its root in Chinese culture and any close tie it makes between its Chinese identity and how it serves its users and customers gives investors confidence that Baidu knows its own business. In contrast, the Sohu logo only appears once in the 2002 annual report. When I interviewed the Sohu IR manager, she told me that many people ask her what Sohu does and what portal means. I am wondering if Sohu could work on an easier way to communicate clearly what it does to its investors. For a young Internet company with an ever-expanding business line, Sohu needs to define its core business and stay focused to establish and solidify its brand strategy. Sohu’s annual report cover page changes every year, which might be good for an Internet company to show changes. However, if the way the company name is spelled changes, it is hard for readers to easily recognize and identify a
foreign company. From 2005 to 2008, Sohu used “enjoy every click” as a tagline on its annual report, which looks good on its 2005 report cover page. In the following years, the style changed and by 2009 it was discontinued.

Document design

Visual design of a document can be very rhetorical in the sense that it can “guide the reader’s interpretation in directions the designers intend” (David, 2001, p. 208). In reviewing these annual reports, I have noticed a few themes and changes related to annual report design. Here I focus on the use of image and color, and visual aid and navigation tools.

The use of image and color

Living in a visually dominated world, we have developed the skills to respond faster to images and colors. We may still remember those days when the annual report was often associated with thick glossy paper with expertly weaving photos and charts and loads of financial stats, used mostly as a marketing tool, but also a comprehensive analysis of a company’s business, competitors, and prospects. Technologies have enabled us to produce documents in full color with better quality faster but also at a much lower cost. However, we do not see these annual reports often. Of the annual reports analyzed in this study, Sinopec has been producing traditional annual reports. Baidu only
did it once in 2005. Sohu never tried. This seems to be the trend for U.S. domestic companies by using a “10-F wrap” instead of an annual report for its shareholders. So international companies are imitating the practice by creating “20-k wraps.”

Computer technology might be playing this game-changing role. Images can be effortlessly manipulated. Information can be provided for a much lower cost online. Companies do not feel obligated to decipher the complicated financial information by creating an easy-to-read annual report because investors can go online and digest that information themselves. So the use of visual elements such as images and colors is no longer heavily addressed. However, if any image or artwork is used, it is absolutely necessary to make it clear to readers by labeling it, cross-referencing it unless the image itself can stand alone and be functional.

In my study, I also examined the uses of images. Examples used in the visual analysis section showed some changes over the years in terms of quality. For example, in the 2000 Sinopec report, the central part of the first page was occupied by this image:
I was wondering how informative this image was. The design intends to show the four different business types the company is engaged in. However, the low resolution, tiny photos, overwhelming framing in red, which Tufte calls “chartjunk,” as well as the lack of captions and explanations make this image distracting. In 2009, the company clearly improved the presentation of the same information. Though the same small photos were used, changes to other visual elements drastically transformed the effect.
In the 2000 Sinopec report, designers did provide a legend at the right bottom corner, which was not effective. First, no label was given to this legend. Readers have to figure out what it is and what for. Second, the design violates the Gestalt principle of proximity, which disassociates the signified and the signifier. Third, the design creates an imbalance for the page with the right side emphasized, which may mislead readers in believing that marketing and distribution and chemicals are the focuses of the company. The following two figures compare the changes in visual design. The images are resized so that they can fit on one page for comparison.
Visual aids and navigation tools

In the digital age, searching for needed information can be a daunting job.

Readers rely on visual aids and other navigation tools to find their way and complete their tasks or goals when they interact with a document, such as an annual report.

Without these visual aids it may reflect badly on the company as it can be assumed that the company is purposely hiding information from investors. That information could easily be interpreted as negative financial results (David, 2001). The 2008 and 2009 Sinopec annual reports successfully utilize these visual aids to guide its readers: informative header and footer information; table of contents; and color-coded tabs. None of these were used in the 2000 Sinopec report.
Displaying quantitative information

Oftentimes an annual report is tied to a balance sheet with numbers and tables, charts, and graphs. To report financial information, it is unavoidable to use numbers. Not only in the financial statement section, but also in the narrative CEO’s letter, we see numbers used for financial highlights including revenues and net incomes. It seems that we have more faith in numbers with the assumption that they are objective. We tend to forget that corporate writers may very subjectively and purposely select numbers to display and present them in a manner that inexperienced investors may not be able to tell the difference.

If numbers are presented in a creative way, it could be more cost-effective than words to showcase certain company achievements. For example, the following is taken from the 2005 Baidu annual report. The numbers are highlighted by using a larger font and in color to make it stand out. The use of a list makes it more scannable and memorable. It is these numbers that tell us a story about Baidu: its history, what the company is about, the achievements it has accomplished, its users and customers.
Tufte (2001) argues that “the conventional sentence is a poor way to show more than two numbers because it prevents comparisons within the data…tables are clearly the best way to show exact numerical values” (p. 178). A table format may accommodate much more quantitative information. A table is especially useful when a comparison from several aspects is stressed. Compare the following two. Figure 5.20 is from the 2008 Sohu report and figure 5.21 is from the 2005 Baidu report.
1. Total revenues of US$429.1 million for fiscal 2008 were 2.3 times that of fiscal 2007.
2. Brand advertising revenues increased 51% year-on-year to US$169.3 million, reflecting our sponsorship of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the successful implementation of our media strategy.
3. Online game revenues increased to US$201.8 million for fiscal 2008 or 4.8 times our 2007 online game revenues.
4. Net income of US$158.6 million for fiscal 2008 was 4.5 times that of fiscal 2007.

Figure 5.17 2008 Sohu financial highlight displayed in a list format

Full year 2005 total revenue was RMB319 million, representing a 172 percent increase from 2004, and our full year net income in 2005 on a GAAP basis increased almost 300 percent year-over-year to RMB48 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the year ended December 31</th>
<th>FY 2005</th>
<th>FY 2004</th>
<th>Y-o-Y % Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>172%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>297%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income (excl. SBC)&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>185%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted EBITDA&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>176%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic EPS</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diluted EPS</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>245%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic EPS (excl. SBC)&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diluted EPS (excl. SBC)&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Amounts in millions of RMB, except per share information)

Figure 5.18 2005 Baidu financial highlights displayed in a table format

This table displays many more small data sets. Imagine switching the table to a sentence format. Even if we are going to use a list, it may still take much more space to show all this information; besides, it may not be as clear as this table is.

**Engaging with readers/investors**

How the corporate report writers portray the relationship between the company and its representative CEO and the annual report readers—shareholders and potential investors—was another important area I examined. The annual reports I examined in this study approach this topic in two distinct manners from keeping a distance before
2001 (Pre-WTO) to engaging readers in 2008 and 2009 (Post-WTO). Here I used both the cover page design and the CEOs letters to illustrate this drastic change.

Cover page designs

Before 2001, neither the Sohu annual report nor the Sinopec report used a cover page to present the theme of that year’s annual report or to attract readers’ attention. By 2009, both companies have adopted a theme and used both the cover page and inside page to present the theme and attract readers’ attention. To show its commitment to environmental issues and sustainable development in 2009, Sinopec adopted light green on its cover page to indicate its “go green” theme. Sohu used a partially turning globe with shining dots and travelling path to indicate fast connection on the globe on its cover page. Both cover pages demand readership with their intriguing designs. The Sinopec annual report in 2009 also uses an open, inviting layout to solicit readership on every page and provides an informative table of contents to orient readers.

CEOs’ letters

The CEOs’ letters also demonstrate the business culture change from traditional business behaviors before 2001 to international business behaviors in 2009. There are a few noticeable changes. First of all, I saw the changes in salutation, greetings, and signature, which suggests a change in CEOs’ and companies’ attitude toward readers. Before 2001, both Sinopec and Sohu used an impersonal business writing style to greet readers (“to all shareholders” and “to our shareholders”). Such greetings demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm and lack of knowledge of an appropriate relationship between a publicly-traded company and its investors. Traditional Chinese business culture has a
tendency of using primary colors and serious-looking photos to maintain the hierarchy between a company and its shareholders. A larger-sized photo is used to establish that authoritativeness. The photo shows the power of “consuming” readers and it demands listeners, not partners. The caption of the photo uses “Mr.” before the name to demand respect from readers. Both letters are like colorless public announcements with no emotions or excitement revealed.

In the 2009 letters, both companies used a formal American business letter format with appropriate salutation (dear shareholders), complimentary closing (sincerely), and signatures. Such subtle changes reflect an attitude change and a realization that these annual report readers should be considered as equals and partners. Companies and investors mutually benefit each other. The photo used in the 2009 Sinopec report reduces its size by at least 50%. The CEO is smiling with mouth open, suggesting that he is willing to have a conversation with the investors to share THEIR achievements, not just his or the company’s achievements. The caption of the photo also drops the “Mr.” to show friendliness and equality.
To all shareholders:

Year 2000 was of historic significance to both China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation ("Sinopec Corp.") and the petroleum and petrochemical industry in China. On February 29, 2000, Sinopec Corp. was established with the core business assets injected by China Petrochemical Corporation. As a result, Sinopec Corp. became an integrated energy and chemicals company with upstream and downstream operations that were particularly distinguished in the refining and chemical businesses. On October 18 and 19, 2000, Sinopec Corp. successfully simultaneously listed its "H" shares on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and its ADRs on the New York Stock Exchange and the London Stock Exchange in an initial public offering, being the first Chinese company ever to do so. Since Sinopec Corp.’s IPO, Sinopec Corp. has been more focussed than ever on improving shareholders’ value and is determined to discipline its capital expenditure and pursue higher returns on capital employed ("ROCE", defined as after tax operating profit divided by the amount of capital employed), in particular, Sinopec Corp. and its subsidiaries (collectively, the “Company”) introduced a modern management information system, improved operating efficiency and centralised investment decisions in order to establish a modern enterprise system. Thanks to the great efforts of all of the Company’s employees, the Company achieved impressive growth in all its principal businesses in 2000, with significantly improved operating results that meet all the targets set by the Company to maximise shareholders’ value.

In 2000, turnover and other operating revenues of the Company amounted to RMB 328.901 billion, up by 37.94% from 1999, and the earnings of the Company reached RMB 10.006 billion, up by 306.89%, or RMB 14.332 billion from 1999. The basic and diluted earnings per share were RMB 0.20 (based on the weighted average of 71,936,011,584 shares), and the earnings per share based on the number of issued shares as at the year end, being 83,902,439,000 shares, were RMB 0.226. The return on capital employed

Figure 5.19 the photo used in the 2001 Sinopec annual report
In the 2001 letters, there is no noticeable language use that may indicate any actual or perceived CEO involvement in the letters. Both letters start with a general overview of the year 2000 or 2001 and how the year benefited the company. The organization pattern of the 2001 letters shows an influence of traditional Chinese inductive writing with facts presented first. Both letters conclude by expressing gratitude to all shareholders for their support of the company. In contrast, the 2009 letters use personal greetings and personal pronoun “I” to engage with readers by expressing...
gratitude toward readers at the very beginning. The Sinopec letter reads like this: “I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all our shareholders and the public for their care and support”; and the Sohu letter says that “I am pleased to share with you the results of another successful year for Sohu.”

In addition to using personal greetings and expressing gratitude, the 2009 letters also adopt the “you” attitude and use more inclusive personal pronouns “we” and “our” throughout the letter to demonstrate the basic professional communication principles in engaging and reaching out to readers.

We can see a clear CEO involvement from the Baidu CEO’s letters from 2005 to 2009 ("I’m pleased to be writing my first letter to you" in 2005; “As I write my second letter to you all” in 2006; “I can say with confidence that” in 2008). Sohu’s 2005 letter concludes with a CEO’s personal note, which clearly shows a direct CEO involvement in the letter. Although it diverges from the previous sections, it makes that letter more readable and personal.

The following summarizes the comparison of information design with a focus on language use in the annual reports before 2001 and after 2001 from the Chinese companies used for this study:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Sinopec</th>
<th>Sohu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>state-owned</td>
<td>privately-run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>traditional</td>
<td>high-tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. stock exchange</td>
<td>NYSE (SNP) since 2000</td>
<td>Nasdaq (SOHU) since 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>before WTO</td>
<td>after WTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover page overall design</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>engaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover page layout</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>open and inviting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO letters</td>
<td>impersonal</td>
<td>semi-personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salutation</td>
<td>to all shareholders</td>
<td>dear shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>both languages</td>
<td>both languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization pattern</td>
<td>inductive</td>
<td>mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal greetings</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>express gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal pronouns</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>I, we, you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone of the letter</td>
<td>rigid</td>
<td>inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO involvement</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>not clear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.21 comparison of textual design before and after WTO from two Chinese companies**

**Persuasion strategies: visual and textual**

Annual reports serve multiple roles and functions: financial stewardship, establishing corporate identity, marketing opportunity, promoting corporate branding and reputation, and persuading their audiences (Conaway & Wardrope, 2010; Goldstein, 2005; David, 2001). Goldstein (2005) considers annual report to be the most “direct and controlled method of shaping the perceptions of the company’s various constituencies”—shareholders, potential investors, and those who influence shareholders such as financial analysts (p. 30). In the visual analysis section, I have discussed how corporate report designers employed various strategies, from choosing photos and graphic images to positioning visual design elements within the report to manipulating the relationship between text and image, to engage readers and highlight the themes to be conveyed.

In addition to using visual design in annual reports to influence the perceptions of their readers, I also explored the textual rhetorical strategies these three companies used in their annual reports, in particular the CEO’s letters. The 2001 Sohu letter employs a direct persuasion strategy to argue that Sohu is a company that is worthy of investment.
(“five important investment rationales demonstrating why Sohu is a good investment”). The 2000 Sinopec letter uses more content-free business buzzwords. For example, the CEO highlighted a completely new corporate culture the company was promoting by saying “an operating mechanism of market-oriented external operation and synergetic internal operation.” By 2009, companies have changed their strategies to persuade with facts, details, and specifics rather than empty words. That is why we see more numbers used in financial highlights, lists of projects contributing to community, new members in the management team, and names of specific individuals who have been recognized for their contribution to the company in the 2009 letters.

Annual reports also embed cultural beliefs and values in the narrative section such as the CEOs’ letters to influence readers how to perceive the company and its business culture (David, 2001; Preston & Young, 2000). Through various visual and textual strategies, these Chinese companies incite readers to believe that they are businesses rooted in rich Chinese culture; however, they are also connected to the world as global entities, global and industry leaders.

It is true that at different stages of its development, a company faces different challenges. Therefore, CEOs may have different messages to send to its shareholders at different years (E. Ruan, personal communication, June 29, 2010). What does the CEO most want its investors to know? The CEOs choose topics that interest readers not only to establish rapport with their investors but to influence, which verifies what Burke (1969) says “the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents” (p. 41). It may look too obvious if the CEO is trying to report unfavorable financial
information by painting a rosy picture. Instead, CEOs may also choose not to discuss certain topics based on what attitude they wish to shape in the minds of their readers and what action they wish to induce their readers. David (2001) suggests future research on annual reports to explore what details are missing. In 2008, Baidu was heavily criticized for its alleged illegal or unethical business activity of taking money to allow unauthorized medical advertisements to gain a higher ranking on its Web site. As a consequence, Baidu’s share price on the NASDAQ slumped by as much as 25% a day. It was one of the reasons for Baidu to develop the new ranking search engine Phoenix Nest. However, the CEO chose not to respond to this issue at all. Instead of speaking frankly with its investors in the annual report, Baidu CEO spent $40 million RMB to advertise on CCTV, China’s national TV station, to recover China’s top search engine reputation (ChinaStakes, 2009).

Today the Internet industry is still highly regulated in China. Search helps people find alternative sources of information. On a long-term basis, access to independent information undermines people’s trust in the government and makes people think for themselves. Search giant Google’s decision to leave the huge China market, many believe, gave Chinese search giants, Baidu, or Sohu, the opportunity to expand their user base. The rhetorical situation suggests that if the Baidu CEO would appeal to an American audience, he would have to discuss the post-Google search market in China. Many Americans strongly believe in freedom of speech. Any censorship would be seen negatively. Many audiences may raise questions as to how Baidu would function, which
puts Baidu in dilemma. The Baidu CEO chose not to mention it at all in the letter in order to avoid criticism from both sides.

**Political and cultural environments**

Oftentimes financial analysts caution American individual investors to be aware of the social and political environments of international businesses because stability is a major risk consideration. The CEOs’ letters emphasize more the growing business opportunities in China instead of discussing any political or social environment in China. Without discussing the overall political environment in China, the Sinopec CEO in 2001 explained that the company addressed one of the challenges in 2000 (the fluctuating world crude oil and refined products prices) through lobbying the State Development and Planning Commission. As a result, the government “started to stipulate and publish on a monthly basis retail guidance prices for gasoline and diesel.” With the government’s protection, the company relieved the pressure upon its earnings. It is hard for me to imagine how individual investors from the U.S. responded to this while reading the letter. Undoubtedly, this shows the unique Chinese characteristics of influences from the planned economy tradition and the lack of experience in dealing with publicly-traded companies. Does disclosing this information in the annual report increase its company transparency and reinforce investor confidence in investing more?

However, the other two companies are not as lucky as Sinopec. They tend to associate less with the country; instead, they direct readers’ attention to cultural aspects of China. As evidence, in its 2001 annual report, Sohu CEO predicts that “general market conditions remain compelling in both the short-term and the long-term, supported
by noteworthy events such as China’s accession to WTO, participation in the 2002 soccer World Cup and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.” No event like the Olympics attracts more attention of Chinese. The Olympics, for Chinese, is far beyond what a sports event can bring to people. The 2008 Beijing Olympics provided a world stage for China to display its national power to the world and for Chinese people to display their national pride. All three companies mentioned the Olympics in their annual reports. For Sohu, the most important theme in 2008 was the Olympics. Therefore, Sohu used Olympic symbols on its 2008 cover page (see Appendix D). The inside page continued the Olympic theme by using the design of the 2008 Olympic Torch, which was based on traditional scrolls and used a traditional Chinese design known as the "Propitious Clouds.” According to Chinese legends, the propitious clouds refer to the clouds that carried a god who brings luck, peace, and prosperity to the world. For American readers who might not know the Chinese legend, they are at least familiar with the use of the propitious clouds in the 2008 Olympics. Taking advantage of this familiar image, Sohu intends to show to its investors that Sohu is a good investment and it is protected by “the propitious clouds.”

Both the Baidu and Sohu annual reports endeavor to create a rich Chinese cultural environment to express goodwill, willingness to make friends from abroad, and to persuade readers that their companies are blessed with peace and prosperity. The cover page design of the 2008 Sohu annual report embodies several messages: the color of red China, the embedded Chinese culture with the jade ring which symbolizes elegance, nobility, and virtue, and the blend of the west and east (global meet), and strive for excellence.
Compliance: internal control over financial reporting

All publicly-held companies are required not only to produce an annual report and make it available to their shareholders online or distribute hard copies upon request, but also file their reports so that the general public can access them through the SEC Web site. The collapse of Enron Corporation in November 2001 raised such issues related to ethics in financial reporting. Section 404 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX 404) requires each annual report of a public company to include a report by management on the company's internal control over financial reporting. “Internal control over financial reporting” is defined as a process designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (www.sec.gov).

In the annual reports before 2002, we did not see any specific mention of corporate governance or internal control over financial reporting. However, in the 2009 reports, all three companies devote space to discussing this compliance. The 2009 Sinopec report has one section on “management’s report on internal control” and this can be found on the table of contents. Baidu makes it clear that management’s report on internal control is an SEC requirement by paraphrasing the SOX 404 regulations. Baidu highlights the subheading to show that “if we fail to maintain an effective system of internal control over financial reporting, we may lose investor confidence in the reliability of our financial statement.” Sohu not only includes a section on management’s report on internal control, it also includes a disclaimer underneath the CEO’s signature in the CEO’s letters from 2003 to 2009 that “the letter contains forward-looking statements”
and cautions readers/investors to take the risk factors into consideration when making an investment decision.

**Conclusions**

Studying companies’ annual reports to understand how Chinese companies are engaging in the global economy is one way to examine the impacts of globalization in the last ten years. The following summarizes the commonalities of annual reports of these two Chinese companies before and after WTO.

First, in terms of content, there is no distinct difference between annual reports produced by the two companies before and after China’s entry into the WTO. Both companies have the goal and obligation of completing the SEC requirements, so compliance with the SEC requirements was the priority. For example, Sinopec made the effort of hiring financial and legal consultants (no communication experts or information designers though) from the U.S. to guarantee the annual report content is correct in the first five years (Z. Fang, personal communication, June 18, 2010). Therefore, all annual reports are functional documents designed to meet the requirements. Innovation, usability, user-friendliness, or user experience were not major concerns in the document design process before 2002.

Second, annual reports in 2009 demonstrate that companies are competing in a more complex and more international arena with issues that other global companies are facing such as environmental concerns, commitment to community.
Third, companies have finally realized that the importance of annual reports and the “real” audience of annual reports. They began to pay attention to the design aspects of the document in order to engage with readers and enhance the interactive capability between readers and documents. They utilize information architecture to facilitate the use of the annual report by providing navigation cues such as header and footer information, headings, subheadings, tacit use of colors to make the annual report more user-friendly, therefore, to improve user experience.

Fourth, focusing on details has become a new norm in annual report writing, which is an imprint of western writing influence.

Fifth, there is a convergence of the dual processes of conforming to the norm (the SEC requirements and the western professional communication conventions) and maintaining innovation (unique Chinese characteristics) in 2009. Even if the companies understand that they are mostly writing to non-native Chinese speakers, they are not reluctant to use Chinese characters in the annual reports. In 2009, the Sohu CEO even signed his name in Chinese only.

After ten years’ practice of producing annual reports, Chinese companies have gained confidence. They can not only produce functional documents but also begin to emphasize designing for the experience. They increase the usability and interactivity of the document through information architecture and enhance the affective aspects by using exotic Chinese images to attract, entertain, or engage readers. As a result, the annual reports begin to show signs of good information design as advocated by Charles
CHAPTER SIX

A MULTI-LAYERED ANALYSIS OF RESUME WRITING IN CHINA THROUGH A GROUNDED THEORY LENS

Background

Unlike academic genres, business genres have not enjoyed significant attention from researchers. According to Popken (1993), the resume genre in particular is one of the least explored business genres. Miller’s genre theory provides a theoretical base for studying business genres. She argued that “a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish” (Miller, 1984, p. 151). Miller contributed to genre studies in a number of ways. First of all, she extended the scope of the genre analysis to types of discourse often neglected by rhetorical scholars. Miller also posited that genre analysis could clarify certain social and historical aspects of rhetoric that might otherwise be missed. Bhatia concurred that “the little research on business genres that has been reported indicates that in some contexts dominant socio-cultural factors do influence certain types of professional genres” (1993, p. 69). Therefore, it is important to relate genre analysis to social-cultural contexts.

Different cultures may have different standards for resumes; however, investigating differences in resume writing across cultures is a daunting and challenging task. Connor in her book Contrastive Rhetorics suggested that “cross-cultural research of resume writing presents a wide-open field for cross-cultural researchers” (1996, p. 145). She called for the field to investigate three areas of resume writing: the cultural motives,
the dimensions of the genre, and its context (1996). Her call is even more meaningful today, as we now live in a globalizing society characterized by interdependence. The revolutions of communication technology and the modern means of transportation have “shrunk the world.” When job seekers come to North America for employment opportunities, they have to adopt the North American way of self-(re)presentation and persuasion. In light of the current trends of globalization and increased transnational mobility, in Appadurai’s term, “ethnoscape,” (1996)—one of the five dimensions of the cultural flow—people who are seeking international employment need to be aware of how resumes function across cultures and grasp the skills of adapting the non-American way of self-(re)presentation and persuasion. First and foremost, it is imperative to know how exactly the others are (re)presenting themselves in a resume and persuading employers. One goal of this study was to paint a truthful picture of current resume practice in China.

Resume writing in China has not caught much attention from researchers. In the past ten years, only a few studies related to the resume in China have been conducted. In order to compare professionals’ perception of a good resume, Pan, Scollon, and Scollon (2002) conducted cross-cultural resume writing research among professionals in Beijing, Hong Kong, and Finland. The three groups exchanged resumes, and a focus group interview was conducted to see how professionals in one location viewed the resume from a different location. The research showed that these professionals differed on the length of a resume, how focused a resume should be to the job, and how much personal information to include. They found that there was limited historical background on
resume writing in Beijing and why people did not like chronological (archival style) resumes.

In recent years, there have been two conference presentations on resume writing and resume design in China. Xiaoye You (2005) made a presentation on “Why does place of origin matter?: A historical examination of resume writing in China during the last three decades,” at the ICIC Conference on Written Discourse and Contrastive Rhetoric in 2005. He examined 23 Chinese resumes and 25 English resumes with a focus on the section of identification. The comparison led him to identify possible historical connections between resumes and some employment documents used in China in the past three decades. Hu and Gu (2007) presented “Caught between originality and conformity: Resume design in China,” at the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Conference in 2007. Hu and Gu had their focus on the design of resumes in China. With available resume cover design templates, they presented a range of designs that showed individuality, conformity, or a combination of the two.

The idea for my research study originated when I saw more and more job ads in China asking for an English resume. After China’s entry into WTO, on one hand, more and more foreign enterprises were allowed to operate within China, even in industries like banking, telecommunication services and equipment. These companies, though operating in China, may bring their human resources (HR) management system, including recruiting strategies. On the other hand, many Chinese enterprises see the importance of English in the post-WTO economic environment and require candidates to provide both a Chinese resume and an English resume for a vacant position as proof of
their English proficiency. The resume as a genre does not have a long history in China. It is really the design and writing of a Chinese resume written in English that intrigues me. What are the common content areas of a Chinese resume? Does the use of English change the topics to be covered in a resume? To what extent is it different from a resume used in the U.S.? What are the cultural dimensions of a Chinese resume? What are the unique features of a Chinese resume written in English and used in China? What factors account for these features? How do these features impact our understanding of a broader world? Here I present a grounded theory study of resume writing practice in China through analyzing resumes used at three companies based in Shanghai and communicating with human resources (HR) managers at two of the three companies and two other HR consultants. This study attempted to answer these two questions:

RQ1: What characterizes current resume practices in China?

RQ2: What are the cultural motives and cultural contexts for these characterizations?

To understand the current resume writing practice in China, a good starting point is to carefully study the most recent resumes used in real situations. The resumes I analyzed in this study were used for a particular position and submitted to the human resources department of a company. I contacted a friend who is in charge of a state-owned enterprise in Shanghai that specializes in stage design and set-up, lights and sound system set-up. He connected me with a human resources manager who is often the designated person to receive all job applications via email in this company. I requested ten resumes she recently received from candidates for the same position in her company.
She first sent me ten via email attachment, but six of them did not have an English version. I contacted her again and she sent me another ten. This time all of them had both English and Chinese versions. So altogether I selected to study the 14 out of the 20 I received from her. Only the English version resume was examined. Following the grounded theory research protocol in data collection and data analysis, I characterized resume writing in China in terms of substantive features, stylistic features, and organizing principles and examined what different rhetorical strategies were employed to accomplish the communicative purpose. Finally, I explained these characterizations in the discussion section by relating them to cultural motives and cultural contexts.

**Gathering Data**

Given the iterative and comparative features of the methodology of grounded theory, I did not collect all data at the very beginning all at once, which does not mean that they were collected randomly. Instead, I followed the protocols of grounded theory data collection so that there was a steady movement between data and concept and a constant comparison across types of evidence in order to “control the conceptual level and scope of the emerging theory” (Orlikowski, 1993, p. 311). To make sure this iteration and comparison occurred, I selected three sites to study and analyze in turn. The initial concepts that emerged in the first site were contrasted and qualified in the other two.

**Site selection**

Since China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, foreign direct investment in China has increased every year (World Bank, 2006). With the
increasing presence of three types of foreign-invested enterprises and multinational corporations in China, as well as the associated knowledge transfer from foreign parent companies to local subsidiaries (Wang, Tong, & Koh, 2004), it is not surprising that Chinese business communication genres are evolving alongside business practices. In light of previous research that studied the relationship between the modes of human resources management and the ownership of firms in China (Zhang, 2004; Zhao & Peng, 2008), I purposely selected three companies for their similarities and differences. This is one way to follow Glasser and Strauss’s technique of theoretical sampling (1967). All three companies are based in Shanghai and they were founded before 2002. However, they differ in terms of ownership: one is a state-owned enterprise, the second is a privately-run enterprise, and the third is a foreign-invested enterprise. All resumes I collected from each company were zipped in folders and transmitted to me via email.

**Introduction to three companies**

Company A is a state-owned enterprise in Shanghai specializing in stage, lights, and sound design and setup. They prefer recent college graduates. So instead of relying on the online platform to advertise their job vacancies, they usually contact the graduate employment guidance office in many universities in Shanghai (like the career services in the U.S. universities). These university career centers post the company’s job positions on their university websites for their graduates. Sometimes these universities arrange job fairs and invite companies to give information presentations on campus and to meet with their graduates. At these job fairs, Company A meets with students who are interested in their positions and collect some resumes. Typically, they leave their email contact
information on the job post with the university career center and later receive applications via email. Fourteen resumes for a position of sales representative were analyzed.

Company B was a privately-run enterprise in economy hotel management in China before it was listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange in 2005; however, going public did not affect the hiring process because the criteria for hiring was still very position specific, according to the HR manager in this company. Sixteen resumes for an assistant to investor relation manager position were analyzed. The position was advertised on several job search Web sites (such as www.51jobs.com, www.zhaopin.com, www.chinahr.com) and applicants used the predesigned forms to submit their resumes.

Company C is a U.S.-invested consulting company in Shanghai. Three resumes were collected and analyzed. The positions were usually posted on the company Web site. Difficulty in directly collecting resumes from the human resources department of Company C was overcome by contacting people who worked for this company before and who are currently employed there. The sample (one was hired in 1999 and she still works here; one was hired in 2004 but resigned in early Jan. 2010, and one was recently hired) was small; however, the finding was very meaningful because it helped me see how it had been practiced in this company in the past ten years. My goal was not to prove how representative this was; instead, I was interested in exploring the resume writing practice in this type of enterprise.

Because the three companies are engaged in different trades (hotel management, media, and consulting), it is impossible to track one candidate applying for a position in each of the three companies. No effort was made to contact or track the candidates even
though such personal information, including contact information, is available on the
resumes in question. The rationale was to protect the confidentiality of job application
materials, and protect the integrity of human resources personnel who shared information
for research purposes.

**Interview**

The human resources managers from both Company A and Company B were
phone interviewed after all collected resumes were analyzed. A human resources
specialist who recommends applicants for foreign-invested companies was interviewed to
get his insight on what counts as a winning resume from the perspective of a foreign-
invested company. Interview inquiry was used to triangulate the research with the goal
of verifying findings from a rhetorical analysis. The interviews were bilingual (we
switched codes between English and Chinese constantly). Instead of recording all the
phone interviews, I took detailed notes.

**Contextual and Visual Analyses**

**Contextual analysis**

Traditional conceptions of genres focused only on recurring textual features.
Miller’s stress on the need to recognize the social dimension of genre reinforced the
concept of genre as a means of social actions, not only to achieve the communicative
goals, but also to fit into a wider social rhetorical context (Miller, 1994). According to
Bawarshi and Reiff, unlike linguistic genre study (LGS), rhetoric genre study (RGS)
focuses more on “how genres enable their users to carry out situated symbolic actions
rhetorically and linguistically, and in so doing, to perform social actions and relations,
exact social roles, and frame social realities” (2010, p. 157). In RGS, understanding contexts is both the starting point of genre analysis and its goal. I took a descriptive approach while paying attention to the historical context of resume writing in China.

Not only is genre closely related to its historical contexts, but also genre changes over time. Therefore, genre analysis should be pattern seeking rather than pattern imposing. In this study, instead of a cookie-cutter approach (applying U.S. business communication textbook templates to see what is missing from these selected documents in terms of content and design), I took a descriptive approach, advocated by Liu Xie and Zhu to discuss a written genre by describing the features of the existing genre rather than prescribing rules for a certain genre (Shih, 1995; Zhu, 1999). That is why I begin below with a historical context.

A brief history of resume writing in China

Although the resume, as a written professional communication genre, does not have a long history in China, it has now served as one of the crucial steps on the way to finding successful employment, especially for college graduates. Under the planned economy in China, state-owned enterprises were the dominant business ownership. The governments controlled production, consumption, and labor. The higher education sector became a part of the planned economy, serving the manpower needs for building socialist China. The government was entirely responsible for the costs of higher education and for graduate job assignment (Bai, 2006). College students received free higher education, but had no choice as to their career destinations.
When China moved slowly from the planned economy to a market-oriented economy, the higher education institutes consequently experienced the gradual transition from social institutes to enterprises starting from 1985 (Bai, 2006; Wang, 2003). More market forces were introduced to the higher education sector. Individual institutions gained more autonomy in enrollment, finance, and job assignment and college students became clients and had to pay their own tuitions and fees. The mission of college placement offices changed from assigning each student to a work unit during the planned economy era to guiding students and arranging meetings between employers and graduates as a match-maker. They hosted job fairs on campus and served as a mediator of an employment agreement between an employer and a graduate (Hoffman, 2001). However, providing assistance to students in preparing resumes was not a priority of this office.

As a consequence of China’s social-economic changes, administration of students’ employment placement in Chinese universities has gone through a transition from a system of unified job assignments on graduation to a new two-way selection system which gives both university graduates and potential employers the right to choose. It was this transition that gave birth to the resume. Since 1993 resume writing in China has evolved in four stages: the deficiency stage, the emergence stage, the unsolicited self-recommendation stage, and the solicited online submission stage.

*The deficiency stage*

Generally, before 1993 a resume was not considered crucial to finding employment. From 1987 when the first employer-college graduates meeting was held at
Tsinghua University for the first time in China until 1993 (http://www.tsinghua.edu), most jobs were still assigned. When a potential employer, often from a private sector, planned to recruit a graduate, he/she did not have direct contact with the students. The employer usually contacted a university graduate placement office. The office then contacted the department political consultant (advisor) to recommend a few candidates for interviews. These students would go to these arranged interviews without taking their resumes.

An obvious problem with this practice was that the interviews were not open to all graduates, and many students were not even aware of the opportunities nor could they ask to be treated fairly. Occasionally, there were chances for favoritism. Such an inequality could not benefit employers much either because they were only allowed to interview a small pool of candidates. Thus, they were unable to recruit the ones who might better match their requirements. Despite this, privately-run enterprises were still grateful that they were able to access the “ivory tower” (universities) which had been closed to them for a long time.

**The emergence stage**

China’s rapid economic growth benefiting from the reform and open-door policy created a consequence that was uniquely Chinese. Educational reform was not in pace with economic development. Educational institutions could not provide the educated workforce needed for further economic development—which was seen as a decisive factor affecting China’s capacity to compete in a global economy—especially for privately-run enterprises or even foreign-invested enterprises. Only state-owned
enterprises had the privilege of receiving college graduates each year. However, the low productivity of state-run enterprises could not compete with private-owned or foreign-invested enterprises especially in terms of payment, benefits, and opportunities for promotion. Some people would leave the assigned jobs or refuse to go to those assigned positions and head to the coastal cities in southeast China. However, by 1999, “a national job market had not yet been established in China and people were still constrained by the residence registration system” (Bai, 2006, p. 136).

The practice at the deficiency stage lasted until the end of the 20th century. The emergence stage was often referred to as the “two-way selection (or mutual choice),” which was a big leap-forward when compared with the unified job assignment system. The huge disparity in pay, for example, 2000 RMB v.s. 500 RMB, between state-owned enterprises and the emerging private enterprises or the foreign-invested enterprises prompted many—including both recent graduates and veteran employees—to abandon their positions at state-owned enterprises. Their experience at state-owned enterprises, however, was often appreciated by private enterprises. In addition, the newly arrived multinational corporations (MNCs) and foreign-invested enterprises often hired more expatriates to maintain their business culture when they first arrived in China. They would have higher requirements on candidates’ English proficiency because they wanted to make sure they were able to communicate with each other, as well as with their global customers. A well-designed English resume that follows the western criteria could, to some extent, improve a candidate’s chance of an interview invitation. A classmate of mine shared with me on how she became employed with Deloitte China in 1999:
My boss looked into the Hopkins Nanjing Center resume book and found me. He called me and asked me to come for an interview. Then, he offered me an internship. After the three months internship, I graduated from graduate school and he offered me a formal job with Deloitte. (L. Gao, Personal communication, May 10, 2010).

That resume was designed by following the U.S. resume design principles as we were instructed at Hopkins Center, targeting U.S. companies doing business and hiring locals in China.

Nevertheless, it was still very rare for a Chinese state-owned company to require candidates to submit a resume before 2001. The same was true for many privately-run companies. Hiring was done by the following ways:

- Family/friends may recommend their family/friends to work for a company or as a condition to exchange for favor. Many people have this understanding that it is the most common practice at workplace in terms of hiring.

- If a position needs a candidate to have a college education, they usually submitted their request for a college graduate to the city planning bureau and the planning bureau would give the quota to universities. Eventually a particular university that has the quota may assign one of its graduates to this company. Before the assignment was announced on the commencement day, it was a big secret. No work unit or college graduate met to discuss the requirements or qualifications for a job.
• The third way was for the company to announce a particular date when and where they might be hiring and anyone who was interested in this company could introduce themselves in person. Once they were at the site, all candidates were asked to fill out an application with such items as their personal information (name, gender, age, birthplace, origin of ancestors, family background), education starting from elementary school until the last degree or where coursework was completed, experience (name of work unit, when, where, who was in charge, job title), family info (parents, what do they do, their position/job title, political affiliation), when, where, what awards received, when, where, what criticism/punishment/fine received (see figure 6.1).
The above description gives us the impression that the so-called resumes used preferred the archival style with a list of names of persons and places. Many used a predesigned form that treated every item in the same font, size, color, and treatment. Usually it had the item name first, and a candidate needed to write by hand the required answers. It was expected that each blank should be filled out. Any blank space or section would be considered inappropriate and would be frowned upon or might cause suspicion. The handwriting could be used by companies to speculate about the personality of the applicant.

**The unsolicited self-recommendation stage**

As a consequence, graduates’ unemployment became a hot topic after 2003. To improve their employability, the college graduate employment guidance centers (career centers) at universities encouraged graduates to take initiatives by preparing a self-recommendation document and proactively contacting employers. The unsolicited self-recommendations looked like promotional sales or marketing materials. This to some extent validates Bhatia’s argument that sales letters and job application letters should belong to the same genre of promotional writing (1993).

The self-recommendation material takes many forms in terms of design, content, length, quantity, and size. The majority is written in Chinese while a few pages might have contents in English. It usually has a colored cover page with a background image usually unrelated to the candidate, a self-recommendation letter (similar to a cover letter), a resume with detailed personal information, as well as education and working experiences (both an English version and a Chinese version), copies of all the certificates
they could think of, copies of awards, maybe a recommendation letter from a teacher, or maybe a representative project, and even studio photos. Novelty, originality, creativity, and conformity can all be applied to assess this document (Hu & Gu, 2007). Students often sought inspiration for cover page design from ancient Chinese poems, set phrases, metaphors, or even advertisements. Some played with Chinese words to create a special effect textually or visually. This document, after being approved and signed by the university’s career center, was used at job fairs and campus recruiting events, or sent to companies regardless of the ownership of enterprises, government agencies, or educational sectors as long as they took graduates. This was the most popular trend in job hunting from 2003-2006. With so many graduates looking for jobs, with such a huge file to read, human resources personnel encountered unexpected challenges. Luckily, computer technology and the Internet tremendously alleviated their pain. Hence, the fourth stage of resume writing in China arrived.

**The solicited online application stage**

In this phase, companies rely on their own Web sites to announce available positions, or they post job ads on those job search engines. The popular Chinese job search Web sites are www.51job.com, www.zhaopin.com, www.chinahr.com (chinajob.com). A resume is required to be submitted via email to human resources offices as attachments or by filling out the predesigned forms either on the company Web sites or the online job search platform.

The required items on the forms resemble the old forms used before. Often very detailed personal information is requested. Applicants usually complete all fields as an
unfilled section is seen as undesirable. Computer technology greatly facilitates streamlining the application process and the application materials. Although such a change brings efficiency and conformity to the HR specialists, job seekers lose the freedom and individuality in making choices about the content and layout of resume construction.

In conclusion, resume as a genre is a direct result of the shifts of administration of college students’ employment placement from 1949 to present, which indirectly reflects the historic social economic changes in China in a broader sense.

Visual Analysis

Visual analysis of resumes from Company A

All 14 resumes from Company A were emailed to me as attachments. They were usually one to four pages long. Three had an English version only, while the rest contained both an English and Chinese version. Only English versions were examined.

Since the resumes were only in the electronic format, there was no need to discuss the physical look, for example, paper color or paper quality. These resumes were originally sent to the HR manager via email. There was not a predesigned application form used. It is difficult to detect if any two of the applicants followed the same template as the 14 resumes look quite different. However, the passport-sized photo in most resumes was very eye-catching (see figure 6.2). The photo always appears in the top right corner.
Half of the 14 resumes had “Resume” as the heading/title at the very top (see figures 6.3, 6.4, & 6.5). The personal information section was impressive, with a long list of items: name, English name, gender, date of birth, place of origin, residency, marital status, political affiliation, health, height, ethnicity, etc (see figures 6.6, 6.7, & 6.8). The detailed textual analysis addresses the sections following personal data.

![Figure 6.3 using "resume" as the title example 1](image)
Curriculum Vitae

Personal Information
Family Name: 
Given Name: 
English Name: 
Gender: Female
Age: 20
Date of Birth: 3th February, 1989
Nationality: Chinese
City: Ma Anshan, Anhui Province
Current School: Macau University of Science and Technology
Current Year: Junior
Major: International Tourism Management
Tel: (00853)62687591
Email: 

Figure 6.4 example of using "curriculum vitae" as the title

Resume

Personal Information:
Name: 
Sex: Female
Date of Birth: Feb 25, 1985
Birth Place: China
Tel: +86 021 80012345
E-mail: 
Address: Room A412, Civil Engineering Building, Tongji University No.123
9 Siping Road, Shanghai, China, Zip: 200092

Education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sala</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>woman</th>
<th>Birthday</th>
<th>1989.4.11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>League Member</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Native Place</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Auditing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5 using "resume" as the title example 2

Figure 6.6 detailed personal information example 1
Almost all resumes have clearly marked sections either by line spacing or by section headings with various font size or different text treatment (boldface or italicized).

In general, resume writers keep their resume consistent, except for a few that used inconsistent fonts(e.g. Times New Roman and a Chinese font for subheadings; Times
New Roman and Arial within one list) or font size within one section (point 12 and point 10 or 11) (see figure 6.9).

**2009.9-2010.2 Shanghai Advertising CO. Designing Assistant**
- Search related marketing information on internet
- Arrange the clients’ requirements and make a chart
- Discuss with our team about the work tool

**2006.9-now experience in society**
- Volunteer for FIFA Women’s World Cup
- Family education
- Reception Etiquette for many activities
- Blood donation

Figure 6.9 a screen capture of inconsistencies in one resume

Here are two more examples (see figures 6.10 & 6.11) of this kind of inconsistency although the inconsistency is not as conspicuous as what you see in figure 6.9; nevertheless, we need to admit that it is not an isolated case of a resume with ineffective design, but rather such inconsistency could happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Academic Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEM-8, CET-4, CET-6,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Computer Rank Examination Grade 3. Skilled in the use of Office Software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience and Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizer, School of Plant Protection of Southwest University, Chongqing, September-December, 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Committeeman, Southwest University, Chongqing, September 2006 – July 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-class Dancer in the Second Dancing competition in the Southwest University in 2007 and 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.10 inconsistencies in font example 2
We may explain that such inconsistencies in font happen, for example, using both a Chinese font and a typical English font like Times New Roman in one document, because many Chinese computer users switch frequently typing in two languages.

All the resumes used a relatively readable font size though some did try to “squeeze” more information onto one page by reducing the font size. Fortunately, readability was not sacrificed. No single resume design stood out as unique or exceptionally attractive. The HR manager admitted that she did not pay attention to the design aspect, whether the applicants designed them themselves, or they used a template often found online or in MS Office Suite, or the templates with university names or logos. She was mostly looking for position related content. This information generated through a triangulation in terms of research methods (document analysis and interview) by far emerged as a category which would be verified in the focused coding stage by applying it to resumes from companies B and C.

**Visual analysis of resumes from Company B**

All the 16 applicants from Company B completed the predesigned forms and submitted their resumes through job search sites (www.51jobs.com, and www.zhaopin.com), the name of which can be seen on each resume. Of the 16 resumes
analyzed here, seven posted theirs on www.zhaopin.com; eight on www.51jobs.com; and one went by the zhaopin.com system and attached her pre-made resume. These resumes to a greater extent resemble a form, with photo on the upper right corner and name and personal information on the upper left corner. All the names of applicants stand out on each resume as they are in boldface and a much larger font size than the body text or headings. To balance the upper part of the page, personal information is all right aligned whereas the name is left aligned. As a result, it creates the effect of balance and symmetry which is what traditional Chinese design usually stresses (Fei, 2000; Kress, 1996) and the resulting white space makes the upper part uncluttered. The heading for each section is in blue or dark lavender to differentiate it from body text and or chunk information on a resume for easy navigation and better readability. Because all the resumes were generated by the predesigned form, the outputs are quite similar in font type (sans-serif fonts), font size, treatment of texts, and positioning. The visible difference can be noticed only when we see resumes generated from different job search sites used by this company (see figures 6.12 & 6.13 below), which is beyond the control of the advertising company. Only one applicant included a brief letter of application above his/her resume. These 16 resumes vary in length and all contain both a Chinese version and an English version. Only the English versions were examined. The average length of the English resumes from Company B is one and half to two pages. As with the resumes from Company A, these resumes were emailed to me as a zipped file. So there is no need to discuss the physical paper quality or paper color.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience:</th>
<th>&gt;3 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residency:</td>
<td>Shanghai-Putuo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree:</td>
<td>Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile:</td>
<td>13641995262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:turejia511@163.com">turejia511@163.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth:</td>
<td>1985/1/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>pudong,shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip Code:</td>
<td>200127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Salary:</td>
<td>30,000-40,000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukou:</td>
<td>Hubei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height:</td>
<td>163cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self Assessment**

In facing of problems and challenge, I will to think straight, analyze, even consult with the others to solve it. Office 2003 software can be operated proficiently, and I still continue to study and strengthen me. In English, be good at reading and writing.

**Career Objective**

I can start: within 1 month
Type of Employment: Full-time
Desired Location: Shanghai
Desired Salary: Negotiable Month

Figure 6.12 resume template from [www.51jobs](http://www.51jobs)
Textual Analysis and Coding

According to Charmaz, all qualitative research entails analyzing texts (2006, p, 35). I started studying the content of the texts after a visual analysis of these resumes. In grounded theory textual analysis, there are two primary sources of data: elicited texts and extant texts (Charmaz, 2006). The former refers to any text in which the researcher has participated or solicited while the latter refers to the texts that the researcher does not affect. I was not involved in any way with the text construction, and I didn’t have any
direct contact with these resumes writers. They were all ready products when they reached me, so these resumes used in this research study all belong to extant texts based on Charmaz’s classification.

Because the identifying information on these resumes is very impressive, I separate the discussion into two parts. Part one focuses on the kinds of personal information used. Part two covers other substantial areas /sections in these resumes. Table 6.1 shows how frequently these kinds of personal information appeared in the corpus.

Table 6.1 Frequency of personal identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal information</th>
<th>Company A: State-owned (N=14)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Company B: Privately-run (N=16)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English name</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukou(^7)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political affiliation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the other content areas on the resumes, there are three noticeable features between resumes from Company A and those from Company B. First, the design looks different. Almost all resumes from Company A were predesigned by

\(^7\) Hukou means household registration system which was initiated in 1958 with the basic function as to prove citizens’ identity and safeguard social stability. Detailed explanations of hukou and why it matters in China appear in the discussion section on page 178.
themselves while resumes from Company B were generated by two job search Web sites. Second, they include different content areas and also emphasis is given to different content areas. All applicants from Company B have had work experiences ranging from one year to five years and the average is 2.75 years while only three applicants from Company A have had work experience and no clear language was used to indicate for how long. Third, even if they share the same content area heading, the sections are positioned differently, which shows that resume writers treat the same kind of information with different levels of importance. Resumes from Company B have an almost unified organization order: career objectives; self-assessment; work experience; education background; certificates; language skills; computer and other skills; hobbies. Resumes from Company A show a slightly different organization pattern, although all 14 put education at the top and over 50% of them listed either their coursework or scholarship information or both as opposed to only 19% from Company B. After the education section, there are awards and skills; internship experience /extra-curricular activities; certificates; hobbies; and self-evaluation. Table 6.2 provides a comparison of the content areas in resumes from the two companies and the frequency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content areas</th>
<th>A: State-owned (N=14)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>B: Privately-run (N=16)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduating school and major</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing coursework</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship or scholastic awards</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self –assessment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer certificates</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English proficiency (statement)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages (Mandarin, Japanese, French, German, Cantonese, Shanghai dialect)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English certificates (CET 4 &amp; 6)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other English certificates (BEC, TEM, Oral interpretation, TOEFL, TOEIC)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other certificates (Piano, driver’s license, advertisement design, etc)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of work experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special training received</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional skills possessed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current salary and expected salary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Initial coding**

For the first 14 resumes, I started my textual analysis with initial coding by segment-by-segment coding, followed by word-by-word coding and line-by-line coding in each segment. Often this is known as open coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990). Based on the textual commonalities of these resumes, I identified several possible
concepts and their properties and dimensions. After I finished examining the 14 resumes, I organized the concepts by recurring themes in these resumes. I then linked those concepts that are associated with each other to form categories. Using these tentative categories, I reexamined and re-coded the 14 resumes. This process is known as axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The goal of axial coding was to determine what could be categories and concepts that may cover as many resumes as possible. This process of iterative examination of the 14 resumes produced a set of categories and concepts that are associated with current resume writing in China. Each of the 14 resumes was assigned a number. “S” indicates “state-owned company.” So S1 refers to the first resume examined from the state-owned company (Company A). These identifiers, as shown in the right-hand column of the following spreadsheet, make it possible to trace back to the original resume to verify any fact.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Codes from company A (a state-owned company)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>giving the document a title</td>
<td>using the word &quot;resume&quot; as the document title (S2, S3, S4, S6, S11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>using his/her name as the document title (S1, S5, S7, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>using a combination of name and the word resume as the document title (S8, S10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing contact info</td>
<td>providing a cell phone number (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing an email address (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing a mailing address (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S10, S12, S13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>using an English name (S1, S2, S6, S7, S9, S11, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing detailed personal info</td>
<td>attaching a photo (S1,S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S9, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identifying gender (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S8, S9, S11, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>giving date of birth (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S8, S9, S11, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing marital status (S1, S7, S8, S11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing hobbies and personal interests (S1, S3, S5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>giving height, weight, health info (S1, S7, S9, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing unique Chinese info</td>
<td>showing hukou/residency information (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 S7, S9, S11, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing political information (S4, S6, S9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clarifying on ethnicity (S2, S6, S7, S9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing education background</td>
<td>highlighting graduating school and major (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12,S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing coursework (S1, S4, S5, S6, S8, S9, S13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing scholarship or scholastic awards (S1, S3, S5, S6, S8, S9, S10, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing graduating high school (S1, S7, S13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing work experience</td>
<td>listing school-related and extracurricular activities (S6, S8, S12, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing a job objective (S6, S7, S9, S12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>describing internship experience (S5, S6, S12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>describing employment experience (S1, S2, S10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>showing computer skills</td>
<td>listing non-computer, non-English related certificates (S1, S3, S6, S11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing computer operation certificates (S1, S3, S4, S5, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing other computer skills (S1, S3, S4, S7, S13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>showing language skills</td>
<td>listing CET 4 and CET 6 (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing other English certificates like TEM 4, BEC, Oral Interpretation (S1, S8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>describing English language skills (S1, S3, S10, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listing other language skills (Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Shanghai dialect) (S1, S2, S3, S6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing oneself</td>
<td>assessing oneself (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S10, S11, S13, S14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focused coding

After open coding, I selected what seemed to be the most useful initial codes and tested them against extensive data—a stack of 20 resumes collected from both privately-run and foreign-invested companies. The reading of the 20 resumes in this focused coding was guided by the initial concepts. This process followed the constant comparative analysis method of the Grounded theory as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). To do so, I compared these 20 resumes with the 14 resumes used in the initial coding process.

I first compared data with codes. The 20 resumes were first sorted into the initial concepts generated by the 14 resumes. It did not take long to notice that the initial concepts generated by the first 14 resumes could not accommodate some of the findings from the 20 resumes. Accommodating the 20 resumes forced me to go back to reconsider some of the 14 resumes. For example, the concept of “providing detailed personal information” did not include a concept of listing current salary and expected salary range because most of the applicants (the 14 resumes group) are recent college graduates who did not have a job history. Four new codes, in addition to those initial codes, emerged in this phase, including clarifying current salary and expected salary range which many career services experts often suggest applicants to exclude; listing years of work experience; listing trainings received at work or after school; and listing other professional skills, and so on.

Next, I compared codes with codes. New codes this time were given special attention so that they could be added to the initial concepts. These new codes include
highlighting oversea experience, clarifying marital status, listing current salary and expected salary range, indicating current employment status and how soon the candidate will be available to work, detailing work experiences, indicating years of work experience, detailing training received at work or after school like accounting computerization, TMT (Teach me trade) training, providing other professional skills such as nursing, dispatch, stenographer level 3, hybridizing with both English and Chinese, detailing computer proficiency and skills (proficient in MS Office, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Flash MX, AutoCAD, Visual Basic) in addition to including computer certificates received. I then applied these new codes to the 14 resumes by resorting and reanalyzing them. Once again, this process of adding new concepts and reanalyzing the data shows the strength of a grounded theory research approach.

During the focused coding process when codes were compared with each other, I found higher order commonality, which grounded theorists often called “concepts” derived from the codes. The following table summarizes the new concepts from the privately-run company. Similar to how the 14 resumes from the state-owned company were treated, each of the 16 resumes from the privately-run company was assigned a number. “P” indicates “privately-run company.” So P1 refers to the first resume examined from the privately-run company.
Table 6.4 Emergence of concepts from the codes in Company B data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailing work experience</td>
<td>Showing current salary (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listing jobs performed, employers worked for, responsibilities held, results achieved (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving the number of years work experience (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing employability</td>
<td>Listing trainings received (P1, P9, P10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presenting specific computer skills or competency (P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing English language skills (P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15, P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Displaying other professional skills (P9, P10, P12, P13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theoretical Saturation and Sorting

“Theoretical saturation is what grounded theorists aim for” (Charmaz, 206, p. 114). When no new patterns appeared in resume no. 26, I believe the analysis had reached a saturation point. So I stopped collecting data, though I finished the rest of the stack by comparing each segment with the codes. In the process of both initial coding and focused coding, I wrote a number of memos on such concepts as hukou, use of photos, job assignment system, persuasive strategies, language use in an English resume, and self-assessment.

Using what Glaser and Strauss called the “constant comparative method,” I compared each concept in turn with all other concepts from the state-owned company and the privately-run company. Since some concepts show commonalities, I grouped them into categories by analyzing the codes, concepts, and studying and sorting my memos.
The emergence of categories from the state-owned company (Company A)

By comparing each concept in turn, I found a common theme among the following concepts: giving detailed contact information (cell phone, email, and mailing addresses); providing detailed personal information; providing unique Chinese information. Because they share the theme of revealing identity with Chinese characteristics, I consider this as the first category emerging from the state-run company data. The following diagram demonstrates the formation of this category.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.14 diagrammatical emergence of the category "revealing identity"**

In order to persuade HR managers that he/she is a competent candidate for the position, job applicants choose to provide both facts and narrative or descriptive accounts/statements of one’s capability. The second new category emerged from the data and is diagrammatically presented in Figure 6.15.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.15 diagrammatical emergence of the category "details are crucial"**

In addition to education background and work experience, applicants also provide evidence to prove that they possess other transferable skills that are essential in the 21st century in China (see figure 6.16). These skills include the proficiency in operating computers, English language skills, and even driving skills. From these skills the third category emerged.
Emergence of categories from the privately-owned company (Company B)

Concepts derived from the state-owned company (Company A) data were first used to analyze the privately-run company (Company B) data. On one hand, the concept “providing detailed education background” had insufficient support from this data analysis because most applicants only provided graduating school, major, degree, and year with no further details. For example, there was no coursework list, special project completed, school related activities or extracurricular activities, or internships. On the other hand, these concepts were not enough to accommodate and explain all the data. New concepts emerged as detailing work experience and enhancing employability, which added further substance leading to substantive theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967).

Not only concepts, but also categories have been applied to the privately-run company data in order to discover new categories. As a result, among the list of emerging categories, we can find two new categories—details and specifics sell more and a larger skill set enhances employability.
Sorting Memos, Diagramming, and Generating Theory

Memo writing is inseparable from ground theory study. I had quite a few memos on resume writing in China. Each memo to some extents equals to a category. I had memos on hukou, driver’s license, cross-cultural resume, resumes in China before 2000, photo use, self assessment, English language proficiency and so on. In the process of sorting my memos, I begin to see the relationships between the categories. Here is a diagram (figure 6.19) showing all categories and their relationships of resume before 2001. Figure 6.20 shows all categories and their relationships of resume in 2010. The highlighted parts are those that did not appear in the resumes before 2001.
Figure 6.19 Emergent categories from resume data before 2001

Figure 6.20 Emergent categories derived from grounded theory analysis of resume data in 2010
It almost happened at the same time when China was moving fast toward the international markets, there was also a late wake-up call to value national and cultural traits. Before China’s entry into WTO, state-owned companies and privately-run companies did not often request a predesigned resume. Foreign-invested companies carried their practice to China and requested only an English resume. In 2010, we can see that all three types of companies not only ask for resumes, but also may request both a Chinese version and an English version.

This study reveals that changes in China and technology account for most of the content changes in resume writing in the last decade. Fifteen years ago, a college degree carried much more weight in China than it does today. After China implemented the plan to move the function of Chinese higher education from elite education to mass education by expanding the college enrollment (Bai, 2006), it is not an exaggeration to say that graduation from college also means unemployment for many students. If we compare this with the unified job assignment system adopted by Chinese higher education institutions from early 1950s to early 1990s, it is a serious matter. Now students can no longer always rely on the name or the reputation of their university to secure a job. Instead, they have been advised to substantiate their college degree with more specifics on their education and any work experience or social practice (similar to service learning) on their resumes.

Technology is another big factor that affects the presentation, delivery, as well as content of a resume. In terms of content, for example, this study shows that applicants’ contact information changed from listing home phone number, home address, and
mailing address to mobile phone number and email address because mobile phone and email are more frequently used by companies. In addition, most applicants include a section on computer technology in their resumes. A photo was not on a resume before 2001. A photo print was occasionally submitted along with a resume or application form before 2001 as a supplementary application material. Now a photo has been integrated into a resume because technology is widely available to add an electronic copy of a photo.

My comparison and analysis shows that, by 2010, resumes share several distinctive features. First, all applicants still think it is important to provide very personal information regarding their gender and date of birth. Second, almost all candidates include a narrative section, called “self-evaluation” in their resumes. Third, a significant number of candidates provide a passport sized photo of themselves in their resumes. Fourth, residency and hukou are still deemed important in resume writing. Fifth, the experience section is expanded, with more details and specifics. Sixth, English language skills and computer skills are mandatory in resumes. Occasionally applicants would highlight an overseas experience. These salient features characterize current resume writing practice in terms of how personal information is treated and what content areas to include in a resume. In the following discussion section, I examine cultural motives and cultural context in the hope that they might assist us in understanding these characterizations in current resume writing practice.
Discussion

The distinctive features above have adequately answered RQ1: What characterizes current resume practices in China. Let’s now explore answers to RQ2: What are the cultural motives and cultural contexts for these characterizations?

Before I show the emergent theory on Chinese current resume writing practices, I compare the concepts, categories, as well as codes and memos so that I can decide which one can be used for a further examination on cultural motives and cultural context. The resume, as a new professional communication genre used in China, needs to be recognized in a broader context especially when the English version is provided. The current practice demonstrates an influence of both a typical English resume as used in western countries and a traditional Chinese archival style application form.

Leaving an impression or revealing identity

While a photo is a short-cut to leave people an impression, photos also may reveal more things than things such as words, age and gender do. Unlike in the United States, where there is a concern that revealing identity may lead to discrimination in the hiring process, Chinese applicants choose to attach a photo to their resumes in the hope of establishing a closer contact between the employer and an applicant so as to leave a good first impression. A photo might not be the most important thing in a resume; however, when two applicants have similar backgrounds, that small photo may make a difference: one will get an interview while the other won’t. So from the perspective of applicants, it may not hurt much to volunteer this information. College graduates want to look more professional in the picture so that they may persuade the HR manager that they possess
professionalism which could save company cost in training the newly employed. Adding a photo is more a personal choice (see figure 6.2 on page 158); however, judging by the popularity of photo studios specializing in taking resume pictures, this is a very effective persuasion strategy.

From the perspective of the employers (according to the HR manager at Company A), a photo gives them an opportunity to sense if the applicant “fits” the company in appearance. Companies prefer employees for certain positions to be more personable, approachable, and presentable. They are not only hiring a person to do the job, they are also looking for a colleague to work with, someone who can fit, and someone who may identify with the company culture. In short, they welcome more direct and vivid information that could help them learn what kind of person the applicant is. In this sense, a photo is such a shortcut although a digitally-enhanced studio photo might also be misleading.

Attaching a photo in a resume is a relatively new phenomenon. Before 2000, resumes sent to state-owned, privately-run, or foreign-invested enterprises usually did not have a photo attached. Resumes from Company C proved this point. Online application before 2000 was rare. HR usually had the opportunity to meet with the applicants when a resume was submitted. Now online job search sites have provided an open and equal/level platform for a two-way selection or mutual choice. It is the medium that conditions and intensifies the importance of resume on the way to finding successful employment.
Direct persuasion vs. presenting facts

A conventional North American resume-writing practice is to present facts in a form of bulleted lists. In China today, online application has made it difficult to send a cover letter (one candidate used a letter format in front of her resume and another one added a special note at the end of her resume.) One resume without the company of a cover letter is the only document that decides whether the person will get an interview. Therefore, the resume has taken on a function that could have been achieved through a narrative cover letter. That may explain why so many applicants had “self-assessment” as a separate section in their resumes. The commonly seen synonyms are self-evaluation, self-appraisal, personal description, and profile. The content covers highlights of achievements, awards, capability, English proficiency, computer skills, personality, as well as such buzzwords as team player, innovative, fast learner, motivated, hard working, and independent thinker. Ethics and morals are also aspects applicants included in this section. They are often displayed in a paragraph format.

This section of self-assessment did not come up often in the resumes before 2000. A detailed study of the self-recommendation cover page design templates suggests that persuasion strategy style and tone has changed from 2005 to 2010. In 2005, such phrases were often used: “I’m a pure bred (hidden talent), are you the person who can discover me?” “If you give me a chance, I will reward you many many times.” “Missing me today will be your lifelong regret.” These sentences set a challenging tone and may easily leave a negative impression. Influenced by the deeply-rooted Confucian ideology, HR personnel tend to see the relationship between HR and applicant as unequal with HR
being more powerful and superior to the applicant. They have the expectation of maintaining such a ritual—the proper behavior is expected to show respect. Any challenge may be seen as a threat to the balance of the ritual, which is something that should be prevented. If not, the applicant may face the consequence of not getting an interview opportunity.

As more graduates are joining the army of job hunters, and as HR is getting more and more demanding, college graduates have changed their persuasive strategies from being more boastful to being down-to-earth or even “self-degradation” and “target/reader-glorification” (Bhatia, 1993). For example, one candidate used a note at the end of the resume with these statements “I am grateful to you for reading my resume. I wholeheartedly hope to get your recognition. I expect to become a member of your company. Thank you!” When I interviewed an HR manager about a winning resume, she shared this note with me. The following is from the person who was hired by the company. “When my unfamiliar name appears in front of your eyesight, the moment you started with my personal information does my gratitude towards you develop. I expect a further communication with you. It is my pleasure that my youth and time will testify my promise and my action will return your right choice.” The persuasive tactics they use are subtler and more cautious in order to maintain the ritual so as to please HR managers. It seems that a fine line exists between confidence and arrogance. Applicants want to leave the HR an impression of being confident; however, it may be interpreted as being arrogant.
“Hukou Matters”

Any knowledge of the hukou system in China is the key to understanding employment issues in China. Hukou means household registration system which was initiated in 1958 with the basic function as to prove citizens’ identity and safeguard social stability (China Daily, 2000; 2002). Chinese citizens are divided into two main categories: city residents and rural residents. Once the residence was registered, it was very difficult to change. The hukou system is a mechanism used by the central government to control the labor flow, especially from rural to urban areas. Through the practice of redistributive economy, the state was able to order, regulate, and discipline its subjects (Yang, 1988).

Employment, to a large extent, is linked to one’s residence status. Rural residents do not enjoy the quotas allocated to urban people, nor can they get formal jobs, or be enrolled fully at city schools (Bai, 1998). Things started to change in 1993 when the hukou system was loosened and people were allowed to leave their assigned jobs and go to coastal cities to look for a job in private sectors (China Daily, 2000). With an increasingly developed market-oriented economy, by 2000 the reform of the household registration system, which restricts the free flow of residents, resources, and capital, seems inevitable (China Daily, 2000). Some local authorities took significant steps in this regard. Shanghai adopted a policy that allows outsiders to get residence permits by purchasing houses. This policy not only greatly promoted the real estate market, but also attracted investment. By November 2002, the government announced they would end residence quotas in provincial capitals and cities so that college graduates could seek jobs
across the country (China Daily, 2002). Still, the linking of residence requirements with employment is a big hurdle for both employers and applicants in terms of the best matches between a vacancy and the qualifications of a job applicant. Shanghai hukou is still preferred today. Both HR managers I interviewed rank hukou/residency high on the list. The three applicants who included their graduating high school in their resumes used an indirect rhetorical strategy to indicate to the HR managers that they are locals (Shanghainese) with Shanghai hukou, different from those college students who are only currently living in Shanghai with a temporary Shanghai hukou. The evidence is that they attended local high schools. The locals can tell it is true, judging by the easily recognizable school names.

The Myth of Experience

If the job ad says experience required, college graduates often feel “threatened.” According to a survey done in 2007 by Jiefang Daily on the perceptions of employers and college graduates on the factors that affect hiring, employers ranked major (85%), graduating institute (59%), and GPA (52%) as the top three factors while college graduates perceived experience (68%), graduating institute (50%), and major (45%) as the deciding factors (Career Guide Tsinghua University, 2009). Only 48% of employers listed experience while only 26% of the students believed GPA is important. This mismatch in the perception is very interesting. There are things employers were looking for from a resume while the students did not list it as they assumed it is not what HR wants to see. The HR managers I interviewed support the findings in the report.
However, students are not convinced that it is the case (Career Guide Tsinghua University, 2009).

Resumes from Company B all placed work experience at the top right after the self-evaluation. Such an organizing principle is based on the premise that a narrative statement and direct persuasion strategy needs to be backed up by facts, details, and specifics. Another persuasive strategy employed by applicants in the experience section is the attention to details, to actions, and effects (see figure 6.21). This applicant listed his major duties, how he analyzed specific energy sources, and how he communicated with oversea customers when he worked at the Shanghai Zoom Intelligence Co., Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005/4–2008/8</th>
<th>Shanghai Zoom Intelligence Co., Ltd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Industry Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. searching for English news pertaining to Chinese energy industry, then upgrade company website (<a href="http://www.zoomchina.com.cn">www.zoomchina.com.cn</a>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. analyzing specific energy industry in China, such as crude, natural gas, petrochemicals, coal chemicals, DME, CBM, power, alternative energy sources (nuclear, wind, solar, fuel ethanol, biodiesel), in order to get a deep understanding of their industrial chains; researching latest laws and regulations of both central and local governments; forecasting trend of corresponding energy sources; monitoring major players, R&amp;D entities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. contacting overseas clients via telephone and email; collecting and sorting information in accordance with needs of customers, such as Petromin, Total, Shell, Sasol, Petrobras, BG, Climate Change Capital, NWSALNG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. compiling excel graphics and industrial weekly report in English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. fulfilling the company’s internal database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.21 current practices with specifics

This is a deviation from the past, especially with a Chinese archival style when only the name of work unit was needed (see figure 6.22). From figure 6.22, we can see that the applicant did not provide any details as to what she did when she interned with Shanghai SMG. These two screenshots demonstrate the change in rhetorical patterns in resume writing.
HR managers prefer candidates who have the ability to learn well and fast. This is true especially in the field that changes very fast such as software industry. When it comes to designing a new program, if a person can learn things very fast, it will greatly reduce the learning cycle and put the company in an advantageous position. So GPA is often used as an important indicator to predict how well the applicant might perform. HR managers say that their experience shows that students with good GPAs perform better at the workplace and they usually develop a good attitude toward work and are more conscientious about what they do (Y. Wu, personal communication, June 1, 2010). So usually these students have the potential to contribute more to the company.

Both state-owned and privately-run enterprises rank a student’s major on the very top while foreign-invested enterprises like the name of graduating institute the best. If Site A is hiring for a marketing position—because it is such a popular major, and almost all universities have such a major—they would choose candidates based on university rankings. China has been using a merit-based university admission system. Every year all high school graduates take the national college entrance exam. In recent years, five subjects have been tested. The test papers from one entire province are collected together

8 Chinese universities do not use the same GPA system as what is commonly used in the U.S. universities. However, GPA has been a convenient translation of the Chinese system that shows a student’s overall academic performance.
and centrally-controlled and graded by following the same standard. The higher scores a
student makes on this test, the better school he/she goes to. Therefore, it is a well-
established understanding that students from those better schools are smarter. They have
the ability to learn new things faster and better. So they have the potential to be more
capable and better candidates for future positions. Surprisingly, of all the 33 resumes, no
one included GPA at all. It might have something to do with the fact that Chinese
grading system (not based on 4.0) is not consistent nationwide.

“English First”

Almost every job description asks for some level of English proficiency. Often it
is mandatory. As China’s entry into the WTO, the country cried out for more
professionals with a good command of English in every field. We can also see that with
the accession to WTO, the ability to communicate in English is emphasized in
universities and colleges. According to Zhong (2005), special weight has been given to
the teaching of foreign languages and computer science as compulsory subjects. Almost
all university students in China are given at least four periods a week for two years to
study English (Zhong, 2005). They are expected to pass the Band 4 College English Test
(CET 4) before graduation. Many universities tie CET4 to the diploma to
encourage/force students to study English (College English Test Band 4 and Band 6,
2005). A certificate of passing the test is taken as a requirement for employment by
many employers, which can be seen from the “certificates” section. One candidate
attached one photocopy of his CET 6 to his application, which also shows the heavy
influence of the self-recommendation stage of resume writing practice with all
certificates copied and attached in the application packet. For example, among resumes from Company A, 86% of applicants listed either CET 4 or CET 6 or both. Although how accurately this test score could reflect a person’s real English communicative proficiency is beyond the scope of this study, it is the fact that human resources managers consider this certificate a “hard index” and they do check this item. In addition to listing CET 4 and CET 6, many candidates also list such certificates as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), CBE (Cambridge Business English), Band 4 and Band 8 for English majors (TEM 4 and TEM 8), and intermediate or advanced interpretation skills, as evidence to prove their English proficiency besides such statement as “possessing good English skills”. Similarly, a certificate showing the level of using a computer is another item HR is looking for.

The importance of English can also be seen from the different tactics employed by applicants. Five applicants revealed their overseas experience. Only one provided details as to what that experience entails and employed a narrative approach in both the “self-assessment” section (“I spent two years in a multinational company…I believe my overseas customer service experience makes me more patient and considerate”) and the “experience” section (“English is the main working language in this multinational company.”) Others applied more subtle tactics by highlighting the overseas school they attended either underlining it or putting “oversea” in parentheses before the school name. One candidate underlined her major “Marketing (International Commerce)” and then added a note saying that all “professional courses lectured in English.” Such a special treatment by underlining the text does make that particular information stand out.
Whether they used explicit or implicit tactics, applicants tended to appeal to the generally-held assumptions that the individual who has better English proficiency and a transnational background is more cosmopolitan and open-minded. Candidates with overseas experience are seen as possessing the potential to connect better with international customers in a global economy. Overseas experience is a value-added asset for a candidate. That’s why in the last decade going abroad has been a rising trend (Xiahua Net, 2002): “the English fever/mania” remains high (Walker, 2008), and overseas returnees (“haigui”) are attractive on the job market (Chen & Wang, 2008). All this could not happen in Mao’s era when an overseas connection could incur criticism or even imprisonment.

For a long time, requiring an English resume itself was considered as a way to assess a person’s English language proficiency in writing. Some workplaces even conduct interviews in English, or at least some parts of an interview are done in English as a way to test or verify a candidate’s ability in spoken English (A. Li, personal communication, May 31, 2010). HR managers today have mixed opinions on such a practice. Conducting an interview in English requires the interviewer to speak English too. Otherwise, if the candidate speaks better English, the interviewer may feel embarrassed. This is seen as “losing face” in front of a candidate. If that is the case, the interviewer may switch quickly from English to Chinese during the interview. The situation really demands the English language proficiency on the interviewer’s side. To improve the work efficiency, HR managers prefer reading Chinese because reading in
Chinese for a native Chinese can be much faster than reading in English (Y. Wu, personal communication, June 1, 2010).

In reviewing the resumes, it can be easily seen that some applicants only literally translated their resumes from Chinese to English (see figure 6.23 & 6.24). What we see in Figure 6.23 is a literal English translation of what the applicant has in the Chinese resume as shown in figure 6.24.

**personal description**

I cheerful personality, stable, vibrant, warm and others in good faith. A serious and responsible work, take the initiative to hard-working. Strong organizational capabilities, hands-on practical ability and collaborative spirit of the group, quickly adapt to the environment and integration of them.

Life at the university was always actively involved in school activities, such as the offer of love, psychological consultation, etc. ... but I also did not relax my studies, so my studies are always to the top. I have a strong language talent, so English can be regarded as my Personal Specialty, and also have strong communication skills.

*Figure 6.23 literal English translation*

**个人描述**

本人性格开朗，坚强，充满活力与诚意。对待工作认真负责，采取主动，勤奋工作。有较强的组织能力，动手实践能力和协作精神，可以迅速适应环境和调整自己尽快进入工作岗位。

在大学的生活中也总是积极地参与学校组织的各项活动，如献爱心，心理咨询等等…但是，我也没有丝毫放松自己的学业，所以各科成绩也总能名列前茅。我有较强的语言天赋，所以英语可以算是我的专长，有较强的口语交流能力。

*Figure 6.24 the original Chinese version*

For the sections where candidates only need to list a few facts, literal translation is not too problematic. However, the biggest challenge is to translate self-assessment statements from Chinese into English for some of them because the rhetorical patterns are
very Chinese. It doesn’t make sense once it is literally translated. Figure 6.25 and figure 6.26 demonstrate that the applicants need to polish the translation.

**Self Assessment**

In facing of problems and challenge, I will to think straight, analyze, even consult with the others to solve it. Office 2003 software can been operated proficiently, and I still continue to study and strengthen me. in English, be good at reading and writing.

**Figure 6.25 poor English example 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like marketing, good at communicating with people and she is a serious and responsible, have beginnings and ends, to make progress, not afraid of tired of fearing neither hardship, mental ability and the ability to withstand and colleagues friendly to each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.26 poor English example 2**

For this following one (figure 6.27), it took me weeks to figure out why she used those four words (From I Total Knot) as a section heading as I highlighted. I seriously doubt if any native speaker of English who does not know any Chinese could understand why it is so. She meant to say “a summary of myself.”

**Figure 6.27 poor English example 3**

I was a child from the countryside, lively personality to the public yet introverted, a man and does everything a down! Professional knowledge in school learning, while also work-study program to reduce the burden of the home, and strive to De Zhiti the comprehensive development of exhibition area has now mastered the basic knowledge and skills, with a certain degree of exhibition planning, organization, design, copy, exhibition operational service levels, and good work ethic and sense of service. I believe that efforts will be successful, I am confident that qualified internship requirements of your company.
“The medium is the message”

Computer technology and the Internet in the last ten years, on one hand, have greatly facilitated applicants accessing employment information and designing resumes; on the other hand, it has hindered applicants from presenting themselves in a way that shows their individuality and creativity. Of the 16 resumes from Company B, two applicants managed to bypass the restrictions of the predesigned forms online by either attaching a resume or adding a cover letter. Resumes from Company A were submitted by candidates directly to the HR office. I was wondering if applicants showed efforts in tailoring their resume to this particular position or whether they included an email message to serve as a cover letter. Of course, I wasn’t able to see this part. According to the HR managers I interviewed, most of the applicants used the email as a transmittal, rather than a cover letter. A small number even left the body message blank. Could there be an opportunity to persuade the HR manager for one more time? It may take 30 seconds to download a resume. While the HR was waiting for the file to download, he/she might browse the message if there is anything. This looks like a good “kairos” for a summary section that highlights the achievements and the competitiveness of a candidate. Again technology is being employed to prevent this from happening. HR now requires candidates to copy the resume content and paste it in the email body message area. So there is no need to download a resume, no concern for the design whether it is creative, or simply a template (Y. Wu, personal communication, June 1, 2010). It is one way to prove that HR prefers content of a resume to design.
Why driver’s license?

What is the big deal whether you have a driver’s license or not in China? Many people still remember the days when China was associated with the kingdom of bicycles. There used to be scores of pictures of Chinese on bicycles in front of the Tiananmen Square. Not any more! With the rapid economic development in China, more and more individuals have disposable money for housing and automobiles. Even though many people do not own a vehicle, they have a driver’s license. Although a driver’s license cannot replace the ubiquitous status of a Chinese ID in China, a driver’s license can allow an individual to access company cars or a rental car if needed.

Before private cars became popular around 2005, it was still common to see that there are several positions in a company for drivers. Their job was mainly to chauffeur their boss around whenever transportation is needed. Driving for someone shows a difference in status and ranking. This is a scenario in which not having a driver’s license could be embarrassing. If the young employee and the boss are going out for a meeting and they will share a company car, and the boss has a driver’s license while the employee does not, this means that the boss is going to drive the employee to their destination. The boss may feel that he/she is degraded. Such a feeling is caused by the traditional Chinese philosophy that sees maintaining the appropriate relationship and ritual important.

Giving the cultural motives and cultural context here, a candidate uses direct and indirect persuasive strategies to enhance his/her employability. For college graduates, they are advised to attend a driving training school to get a license and put that
information into a resume to increase the competitiveness. Two career services experts from a university in Shangdong firmly agree that the applicant with a driver’s license has a better chance in getting an offer than the one who does not when all other skills and qualifications are the same (Wang, 2009).

**Conclusion**

Although this study was not designed to focus on cross-cultural comparison of resume practices in China and in the U.S., any reader who is familiar with a North American style of resume writing can easily see some common features from a resume designed by a Chinese in English. The following summarizes the commonalities:

First, there is no distinct difference between resumes used for companies with different ownership in terms of content areas or resume design. The slight difference in look is caused by the medium used by companies and candidates in collecting or submitting resumes.

Second, China’s entry into the WTO affects the language use; however, in resume design many Chinese see the acceptance of both western and Chinese styles. It is hard to invent anything new from scratch without any prototype or model in mind. If there is anything existing, even if it is not the perfect model to imitate, it is the point to get started. Of course, when it comes to resume writing in English, there were only two options: one was to literally translate a resume from Chinese to English while the other was to model the conventional English resume design widely accepted in western countries. Apparently that was the case before China’s entry into the WTO when the resume was still a very fledging genre. As soon as we began to have more examples, and when this genre began
to be accepted, innovation was encouraged and people began to go different directions to look for more design inspirations. Going back to the traditional Chinese personnel management system was one of these experiments. It proved to be effective as some old practices fit the Chinese situation well and it is more practical.

Language use was only one way to supply the information that a person possesses certain skills and it did not and it should not become a hindrance in preventing a candidate from presenting more accurate information or information that fits the Chinese situation. After all, these resumes are used in a Chinese context, instead of one that is sent overseas for employment or study purposes. Further comparative research may compare the resumes used by the same Chinese in different contexts (in China and outside China).

Changes in resume design also reflect changes in Chinese society in terms of communication technology uses. Any main technology that has been accepted by the society will appear in the resume and will ruthlessly replace the old technology completely, which shows the practicality and efficiency in Chinese society. Oftentimes new things are viewed more positively and optimistically and represent progress and betterness.

The resume, effective as it is to get an interview invitation, still is not the only “weapon” that could lead to an official offer. Now almost all companies require applicants to go through a probation period for about three months. Companies are also using other mechanisms for confirming that the new hire is the right person for the position. After the resume screening, some lucky ones go to the second round. They
may have to take a written test mostly on technical skills and sometimes personality tests, and then an oral interview. After the second round, the selected candidates may be given a three-to-six-month-probation period with a much lower financial compensation or even zero compensation. Their performance during this period is the key to getting the official offer with full salary and full benefits from the company. Such a practice is one strategy companies are using to verify whether what the person says in his/her resume matches his/her ability at work. Companies sometimes also use a database to conduct a background check, not just for criminal records, more to check if the candidate provided factual information in resumes.

Although the resume hasn’t reached an omnipotent status in the job hunting process for every single position, its importance has been widely recognized by job seekers, especially college graduates. This study shows that current resume writing practice in China has unique characteristics. It continues the Chinese archival style in revealing detailed personal information including gender, date of birth, hukou, and etc. The practice also shows an obvious western /North-American influence: focus on specifics, and on action (using verbs), and on using numbers in the experience section. Besides, there is also something new, such as the use of photo, English language skills, and self-evaluation section, which deviates from the traditional Chinese practice or the popular American practice.
CHAPTER SEVEN

A GROUNDED THEORY OF CURRENT CHINESE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION—GLOCALIZATION

In the context of globalization, not only a nation or a company, but also an individual is affected. In his book *The World is Flat*, Friedman (2006) distinguished three stages of globalization: Globalization 1.0 was driven by countries internationalizing; Globalization 2.0 was driven by companies internationalizing; and Globalization 3.0 is driven by individuals internationalizing themselves. Often times, the three foci co-exist and overlap and inform each other. The study pays attention to the overlap of the three, and above all, stresses the rhetorical strategies individuals and companies selected in presenting themselves or the organizations they are affiliated with. I used resumes at the individual level and annual reports at the company level as lenses to examine the social phenomena in China in the age of globalization.

To some extent, this study can be seen as answering the research call by Zhu and Li (2009) after they concluded the business discourse study in China:

“The historical approach will continue to be relevant to the reflection on discursive developments in the fast-changing business and technological contexts of China. Cultural factors will remain a strong dimension for further research. It is interesting to note that in the globalized context, Chinese cultural values are still playing an important role in business discourse formation and development. Future research may need to address more complex issues relating to specific incorporation of both traditional Chinese culture and western influences” (p. 352).
My study indeed took a historical approach to examine and compare the Chinese professional communication practices in the first decade of the 21st century when business and technological contexts change rapidly. This study not only summarizes the features of current Chinese professional communication practices especially in resume writing and annual report writing, but also relates these features to cultural motives in the globalized context. The research findings from this study show a glocal trend, that is, the incorporation of global practice (western influences) and Chinese cultural features.

Cross-genre Analysis

By comparing the findings from both the study on resumes by individuals and the study on annual reports by Chinese companies, I can easily see the trend of current Chinese professional communication practices. The term “glocal” (to be further explained in the second part of this chapter) best captures the unique nature of this current Chinese professional communication practice: the co-presence of similarities and differences, universalities (western practices) and particularities (practices with Chinese characteristics).

The glocal trend we see in current Chinese professional communication practices, for example, resumes and annual reports in this study, manifests itself in various ways instead of a clearly defined or unified format or pattern. Examining this trend more closely, we come up with such features although some may only appear occasionally; however, a grounded theory investigation allows us to discover and recognize these features while other approaches may discard such findings.
First, we may see a combination of both Chinese characters and English words on one page of a document even on a formal document. Such code-switching (see examples below) may seem odd to some readers; often it could result from an intentional choice of the original writer because such an approach fits a rhetorical situation better.

Figure 7.1 a glocal form of Chinese resume

The glocal features showing in the annual reports exhibit various forms, for example, the mixed use of both English words and Chinese words instead of using translation (see below); the use of pinyin when referring to a title (Tian Long Ba Bu) instead of a literal or cultural translation; and reliance on typical traditional Chinese images within the Chinese context.

Figure 7.2 the glocal feature of combining both languages in one document
Second, the English version of a document (either resume or annual report) is no longer a literal translation of its Chinese version. Such a new practice suggests a few things. Above all, we see that document creators understand the importance of audience analysis, understand the difference between translation and localization, and understand that rhetorical strategies, language use, as well as organizational patterns change when a particular language is used to communicate in a specific culture. My interviews with three investor relations managers confirmed that documents used to be written first in the native language (Chinese), and then translated into English. Now it is a different creation process and often different groups of individuals at a workplace may get involved in the
process. Experts are consulted to guarantee the accuracy in following the rules and using the target language (English). For example, in the case of Sinopec, the company hires consultants to review the documents (Z. Fang, personal communication, June 18, 2010).

Third, this study reveals that both the genre of English resume and the genre of annual report (in English) are new cultural products in the past two decades in China. The evolution and development of both genres reflects a similar pattern from adopting/assimilating/imitating the universal western practices to appropriating/acculturating/inventing the unique Chinese practices. Before China’s entry into the WTO, there was a widespread concern of how Chinese companies and individuals could conform to international regulations and universal practices. As a consequence, it was difficult to see anything too Chinese because it seemed inappropriate or incorrect. For example, in resume writing, applicants followed a U.S. resume template and excluded such information as age, gender, party affiliation, hukou, etc that shows a clear Chinese resume norm. In annual report writing, companies saw compliance with the SEC requirement as the priority and even the only concern. Later on, people began to see the need and possibility of breaking some conventions that do not fit the Chinese context or something uniquely Chinese that cannot be easily or properly presented in the non-Chinese way. So they decided to keep it the Chinese way instead of either blindly conforming or completely rejecting. That’s why we see photos, more detailed personal information, and self-evaluation in resume writing. In annual report writing, companies see the needs to engage readers. They adopt more creative ways to attract readers instead of sticking to the functional design principles. They use traditional Chinese cultural
features or images to entice readers. Thus, we have seen some unique incorporation of both Chinese features and Western (English) influences within one document. Such combination not only makes sense but also fits the contexts better. For example, the addition of the self-evaluation section in a resume is to replicate a cover letter as popularly used in the U.S..

Glocal is a first approximation that suggests equal attention to the localization of the global and the globalization of the local. This two-way traffic is complex. Although this study does not compare and contrast professional communication practices in the U.S. and those in China, we have to admit that we have already seen the impacts of this two-way traffic in the age of globalization. Take resumes for example. No doubt the emerging popularity of the video resume and visual resume (www.visualcv.com) used in the U.S., I believe, is a result of combined influences of technology and practices in Europe and Asia (China, for example) in resume design. U.S. labor laws have not changed. Employers are still concerned or afraid of discrimination charges on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, or disability. No matter how much employers would reject a video resume, they will receive video resumes with detailed personal information sooner or later because the growing buzz cannot be stopped.

It is hard to predict what a resume will look like when my daughter looks for a job in the U.S. 20 years from now. My mom’s generation could not imagine having a resume; my generation in the 1990s was more oriented toward a western global resume practice; and a younger generation hybridizes both local (Chinese) and global (Western) practices in resume construction. Such a route seen in the evolution of resume writing in
China truthfully reflects the historical, social, economic, and cultural contexts of China from 1949 to present. Individuals’ rational choices also resemble the rational choice the nation has made to balance how they maintain national identity while embracing global exchanges and penetration in the age of globalization.

A number of terms have been developed even “coined” to refer to this phenomenon of combining or hybridizing two practices or cultures, such as cultural hybridity (Burke, 2009; Kraidy, 2005), and glocalization (Kraidy, 2001, 2003; Robertson, 1995). As we see in this study, there have been different degrees of conformity to the U.S. resume and annual report writing conventions and maintaining or adding elements and sections that are uniquely Chinese. To better understand what is happening in China in terms of professional communication practices, we need to situate this discussion into a broader context and the theoretical framework of glocalization.

**Glocalization**

Globalization does not lead to total homogeneity. Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) argued that “globalization is marked culturally by processes of ‘glocalization,’ whereby local cultures adapt and redefine cultural product to suit their particular needs, beliefs, and customs” (p. 546). Hines (2000) described the process of glocalization in this way: “Business when it invests abroad adapts to some extent to local conditions in order to maximize local demand for their products or services and to minimize the chance of their being discriminated against by trade or investment barriers” (p. 7-8).

First of all, we should start with the historical and social-scientific development of the concept of glocalization. It is a new term to many of us; however, the *Oxford*
Dictionary of New Words included the word “glocal” even in its 1991 edition. This is how the dictionary explained this term: “Formed by telescoping global and local to make a blend; the idea is modeled on Japanese dochakuka (derived from dochaku ‘living on one’s own land’), originally the agricultural principle of adapting one’s farming techniques to local conditions, but also adopted in Japanese business for global localization, a global outlook adapted to local conditions” (p. 134).

During the 1980s, the terms “glocal,” its verb form “glocalyze,” and the process noun “glocalization” were popular Japanese business jargon; in short, they suggest the simultaneously global and local or the ways in which industrial practices are taking a global view of the market, but are adapted to suit the local conditions. For example, foods and services are produced and more important, distributed according to particularistic, local criteria.

A decade later, the success stories of Japanese firms’ conquering the world market while taking account of local considerations and conditions encouraged western companies to consider global localization practices. Soon global localization was abbreviated as glocalization. By the earlier nineties, the term glocalization has become “one of the main marketing buzzwords” (Oxford Dictionary, 1991, p. 134). Glocalization is related to what is often called “micro-marketing” in the United States (Robertson, 1994; de Mooiji, 1998; Tharpe, 2001). According to Tharpe (2001), micro-marketing is a marketing strategy used first by Proctor and Gamble to tailor and advertise products and services towards its multicultural markets. In the marketing mix, such tactical changes are introduced: targeted price discounts and promotion, different types of
promotions, different intensities of outlets, different models or settings for communication, translation of advertisement into foreign languages, and addition of ethnic minority media (p. 86).

Originally developed in Japan as a label for locally sensitive niche marketing, glocalization has been used to suggest that the global and the local may be mutually reinforcing rather than necessarily in conflict. The term “glocal” applies, as the Swedish telecommunications equipment firm Ericsson (1998) puts it in its annual report, where “the market, customers, and products” are “global in many contexts, but local in design and content” (p. 6).

**Business Application of Glocalization**

The concept of glocalization has been applied to business activities, advertising, management, marketing, and social and cultural aspects since the late 1990s. Many companies have adopted a glocal strategy to improve their worldwide performance based on local differences (Shamsuddoha, 2009; Svensson, 2001; Towers, 2004). For example, McDonald’s has successfully expanded its oversea business by tailoring its products to the specific customer tastes in other parts of the world. In India people can get a Maharaja Mac; in Italy, a McItaly; in Morocco, a McArabia; in Japan, a Koroke. McDonald’s menu outside the U.S. may look quite different from that in the U.S. A McDonald's in Tokyo may offer a glocalized menu, “featuring shrimp nuggets, green tea ice cream and the Koroke Burger, with mashed potatoes, cabbage and katsu sauce.”

Another example of glocalization comes from KFC. People associate KFC’s grand success in China (the biggest restaurant chain in China, outperforming
McDonald’s, and contributing more than 20 percent of global revenue of parent company Yum! to its glocalization strategy in China—a foreign brand with Chinese characteristics. Fully understanding its well-established global brand and solid business foundations in China, KFC has taken a bold step to add more typical Chinese breakfast items such as rice porridge, Sichuan pickles, sliced pork soup, and youtiao (deep-fried Chinese doughnuts in the shape of one-foot-long sticks, two inches in diameter). From the company side, it was a gambling strategy even after a market survey. Many saw it as ridiculous. However, it succeeded. People were attracted to these glocalized menu choices not only because of the Chinese flavor, but rather the foreign brand, the management, and service style associated with KFC (fast, clean, and convenient)⁹.

This is how glocalization occurs in a fast food business through its products and menu changes. In this particular sense, it looks similar to localization. However, glocalization also manifests itself through other business activities. In current times, glocalization has become part of the advertising discourses of transnational companies such as HSBC, which projected itself as "the world’s local bank," and McDonald’s, which calls itself "the world’s local restaurant."

Take the fast food industry, especially McDonald’s for example. In James Watson's *Golden Arches East* (1997 and 2006), Chapter one: McDonald's in Beijing: The localization of Americana deserves a discussion here. Though the author (Yunxiang

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⁹ If it is localization, people would go there for its flavor because it is so Chinese. It might give up its foreign aspect by making it “look and feel” like a typical Chinese restaurant. It doesn’t mean that KFC would turn away from fried chicken, its main product. It is one or two addition to cater to customers’ diverse needs. It will be considered as bad glocalization if a 10-year-old Chinese girl comes to the US for the first time and after she sees a KFC says: "wah, they have KFC here too!" In that case, it shows that KFC has well localized in China. It is good glocalization if the girl says that well I’m going to see how different this KFC is different from the one in my neighborhood.
Yan) used localization in his title, what happened in McDonald’s in Beijing as he
described had more glocal features than localization. Glocalization as defined by Ritzer
(2004) refers to the “interpenetration of the global and local resulting in unique outcomes
in different geographic areas” (p. 73). If it is localizing, it would only imitate something
that can be found in the locale or the practice that is the same as, or at least very familiar
to, the locals. This may range from products, to advertising, to management, etc.
Customers would go there for something that they are familiar with, rather than
something different.

Glocalization, on the other hand, results from a more successful study of the
locals (a good example of developing marketing strategy—stressing family value, and
Aunt McDonald-- by following the deeply rooted Confucianism on renqing (good will,
concern, and sentiment) and a carefully selective and creative application of the study. It
balances the curiosity about something new and different and the familiarity (the co-
presence of difference and sameness). Glocalization produces positive responses which
prompt both the global and the local to reflect on what is going on and readjust practices
elsewhere. For example, Aunt McDonald\textsuperscript{10} is a special phenomenon at McDonald’s in
Beijing. Such a practice was also new for many Chinese businesses. Seeing how
successful it is as a micro-marketing strategy, some Chinese restaurants began to follow
suit. A few months ago, a friend told me that she encountered something new at a local
hotpot restaurant, in her words, "something like you only see at McDonald's." Here is the

\textsuperscript{10} One strategy used in Beijing McDonald’s to establish good personal feelings between staff and customer
in order to secure long-term beneficial relationships is to have a few public relations staff to answer
customers’ questions and a few more female receptionists to take care of children and their parents. This
strategy is built upon the traditional Chinese kinship system (Aunt McDanald’s). This practice is in
complete contrast to McDanald’s American practice by replacing human workers with technology.
story: my friend, along with her colleagues and their families, went to a local popular restaurant that specializes in "Mongolian hotpot." Because it was during the rush hours of this popular eating place, there was a long queue. To make sure that people would patiently wait for a seat, the restaurant hired a group of people to keep these customers at the waiting area happy and busy. Male customers had their shoes polished for free while female customers received a mini-manicure. Computer games were available for children. Borrowing from a model implemented by a global chain in China, the Mongolian Hotpot restaurant is meeting multiple needs of the entire family in thoughtful and creative ways. In doing so, a long-term customer relationship has been established.

One impact McDonald’s in Beijing has had in China was the appearance of more local fast food restaurants with customers ‘hovering’ at the tables rather than sitting down. Another aspect that shows this practice is more glocalizing than localizing is that McDonald’s higher hygiene standard for food products and the working process has prompted the local government to pass regulations to force local Chinese businesses to improve their food hygiene; this is a very positive outcome of glocalization. Shamsuddoha (2009) better captured the interactive nature of glocalization in his theoretical analysis as:

Glocalization has emerged as the new standard in reinforcing positive aspects of worldwide interaction, be it in textual translations, localized marketing communication, socio-political considerations. Its decorum is to serve a negotiated process where local customer considerations are coalesced from the onset into market offerings via bottom-up collaborative efforts. This way, the
intended market is given a stake in the overall process and not just the mere end result. (p. 3)

Products may have different meanings and sell differently in different countries. Fast food restaurants adapt their formula to local conditions and also serve different social, cultural, and economic functions than in the U.S. Pizza Hut, for example, in Manhattan may have low status, while in China it is an upscale American restaurant serving pizzas with toppings like squid, shrimp, and Chinese sausage, and dining there is a sign of luxury and status. This is a type of cultural hybridity (a hybrid product of mixed traditions and cultural forms). It does not give prominence to globalization as a homogenization force, nor does it believe in localization as a resistive process opposed to globalization. Rather, hybridization implies an emphasis on processes of mediation. This concept of hybridization, where the interaction and mixing of ideas, values and meanings clash, are negotiated and regenerated, is just what glocalization entails.

The time we are living in is marked by frequent and intense cultural encounters of all kinds. No matter what our attitude is, no matter how we react to /interact with it, I concur with Burke (2009) that the global trend towards mixing, hybridization, glocalization will not vanish, but stay. These processes will lead us to see many examples of cultural hybridity, or varieties of object in the form of hybrid artifacts, hybrid texts, hybrid practices, and hybrid people (Burke, 2009). Of these, hybrid people are crucial.

Glocalization is a dynamic process, and the interaction between the global and the local or the universal and the particular may manifest itself through different forms at
various stages of adapting to the local. This is a two-way traffic. We are more familiar with how western culture has moved to developing countries and how that has been adopted, adapted, and appropriated. For example, we are no longer surprised when we see Kungpao Chicken pizza in China and when we see kimchi pizza in New York, or curry and chips in London, we know this trend will last. As a matter of fact, it is no longer rare to see such a trend. If the pad Thai pizza sign at an international airport food court in southwest U.S. does not surprise you too much, you may feel amusedly surprised to see tofu pesto pizza in a non-chain local restaurant in a small southwest town.

Nevertheless, what really amazes me is how the younger generation is responding to such hybridity. First Kudos to Nick Jr. for launching the kid show “Nihao Kailan,” which is a Chinese version of Dora the Explorer. In the show the main character, Kailan, teaches her friends in the show as well as kids in front of TV screens some typical Chinese expressions, for example, how to say “I love” in Chinese and then expand it to a complete S + V + O sentence. One example how Kailan teaches her friends: 我爱 (I love) flowers! 我爱瓢虫 (ladybugs)! I have been trying to teach my 2-year-old daughter Chinese and English. As soon as I heard it, I told her that she should say 我爱花 (flowers). 我爱瓢虫 (ladybugs). She responded immediately: “No, mom. It’s 我爱 flowers! And 我爱 ladybugs!” Speechless, I am!

Theorizing Glocalization in the Academy

The idea of tailoring and promoting a product or service to a particular regional, ethnic, or other context has been expanded to disciplines other than business, including
geography, religion, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Often times social theorist Roland Robertson was given the credit for “coining” the term glocalization in his highly-quoted article “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” although twice Robertson himself admitted that Erik Swyngedouw, a geographer and an urban political economist, had first begun to use it in the late 1980s (Robertson, 2007). A hard proof of Swyngedouw’s use of this term was his 1992 article “The Mammon Quest: “Glocalization,” Interspatial Competition and the Monetary Order: The Construction of New Scales.” In one of his recent books, Robertson (2009) shared the honor by saying that “the social scientists Robertson and Swyngedouw developed the concept of glocalization at around the same time in separate and different ways in the early 1990s” (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009, p. 46).

Robertson has contributed to theorizing glocalization by publishing a series of articles and books on globalization and glocalization since 1992. Robertson (1995) defined glocalization as “the creations of products or services intended for the global market, but customized to suit the local cultures” (p. 28). He stressed that the concept of glocalization has involved the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and local or the universal and particular (in short the coexistence and interpenetration of the global and the local) (Robertson, 1995). It is the potential that glocalization captures the broad interplay of the universal and the particular that made Robertson believe that “glocalization registers the ‘real world’ endeavors of individuals and social groups to ground or to recontextualize global phenomena or macroscopic processes with respect to local cultures” (Robertson, 1992, p 173-174; 1994,
Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) predicted that “long-running processes of transnational commingling and interpenetration have resulted in a profusion of ‘glocal’ cultures, such that the old binary distinction between ‘here-it-is’ local and ‘out-there’ global cultures becomes increasingly untenable” (p. 46).

One key feature of glocalization is that a considerable sensitivity to differences of many kinds has developed—be they regional, societal, gender, age, or other differences. Moreover, glocalization does not merely involve adaptation in the narrow sense; it also encompasses attempts to create new categories, the construction or the invention of local traditions or forms of particularity (Robertson 1995, p 29). This process can be considered as analogous to Roy Wagner’s conception of the “invention of culture” (Wagner, 1975). In cross-cultural terms, glocalization does not simply produce or reproduce random forms of cultural heterogeneity. It also registers the “standardization of locality, reference points, symbolic textures or contents” (Robertson, 1995, p. 30-31).

The term glocalization captures the sense that local appropriation is seldom simply assimilating and imitating. Rather, it is generally a process of indigenization—of appropriating the foreign objects and practices by recontextualizing them into local matrices of meaning and value (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 79). Glocalization has some connection with other concepts such as “indigenization” (Friedman, 1999), “creolization” (Hannerz, 1992, p. 264-6), “varnacularization” (Appadurai, 1996) and “hybridization” (Pieterse, 1994). Each of these concepts registers the agency of quotidian
social actors in critically engaging with and transforming global cultural phenomena in accordance with perceived local cultural needs as well as values and beliefs.

International globalization means that large numbers of people around the globe are exposed to other cultures on a daily basis without crossing borders regularly but simply through a variety of communication media. Furthermore, they might also encounter immigrants, refugees, international students, or tourists in their own locality. They might also encounter cultural artifacts and commercial establishments that bring other cultures into close proximity to their own. Increasing international globalization or glocalization leads to the growth of transnational social spaces, social fields, and networks. Living in a transnational world, individuals can adopt an open, encompassing attitude (cosmopolitans) or a closed, defensive posture (locals) (Hannerz, 1990, 1996). In other words, the presence of a cosmopolitan outlook is conceptually distinct from the transnational experience.

Tomlinson (1999) proposed the notion of glocalized cosmopolitanism to conceive a person who is able to transcend the global-local opposition and live in a glocal cultural universe. Roudometof (2005) further suggested that operationalizing cosmopolitans and locals in terms of degrees of attachment is in fact consistent with the fundamental premise of glocalization—the theoretical and empirical possibility that individuals might not be consistent in their advocacy of such ideals, but that they might be displaying different degrees of such attitudes, and that the structure of their attitudes might be influenced by a variety of other factors.
Sociological usage of glocalization highlights the simultaneity or co-presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in globalization. Robertson (1992, 1994, 1995) proposed that the ongoing interpenetration of the universal and the particular is the most general characteristic of global change. The concept of glocalization reconciles the homogeneity/heterogeneity dispute. He suggested that we learn from the discipline of business studies. Specifically, global marketing means, in principle, that each product or service requires calculated sensitivity to local circumstances, identities, practices and so on. This approach to the practical implications of globalization teaches us that globalization is not an all-encompassing process of homogenization but a complex mixture of homogenization and heterogenization.

What James Watson and his co-authors have argued in the edited book is part of a growing literature on the ways in which the particular enables the universal to work and, indeed, how homogenizing forces actually produce heterogenous tendencies. In certain respects, the world is becoming very similar. But at the same time, this similarity is sustained by difference. Products of various kinds gain purchase in specific locales, particular ethnic and gender groups, and so on, through adaptation to these circumstances. Thus we can most usefully speak of sameness-within-difference.

Social Applications of Glocalization

After Robertson deployed and developed the concept of glocalization, it has been applied to explain such diverse social phenomena as Argentinian riots, Japanese film, German environmentalism, Asian beauty pageants, Brazilian football, forms of migration, and European mass media. Most notably Giulianotti and Robertson have been
collaborating on projects that examine the inter-relationship of migration and popular culture and they have developed a typology of glocalization strategies that might facilitate future studies of the glocalization projects of different migrant communities in other domains of popular culture. For example, they conducted a grant project that focused on the North American-based supporters of two Scottish football (soccer) clubs: Celtic and Rangers (2006, 2007).

Another empirical application project conducted by Giulianotti and Robertson is worth discussing. Their project has resulted in one article included in the edited book *Globalization and Sport* and one book *Globalization and Football* in which they discussed the interrelationships of globalization processes and the sport of football – how the world’s most popular sport has been influenced by the complex global processes and flows. They analyzed and explored the historical, cultural, political-economic, political, and social perspectives and dimensions of football.

In addition to empirical applications of the concept of glocalization, researchers in academia have also attempted to expand the use of glocalization. Of these researchers, two have developed new terms such as: methodological glocalism (Holton, 2005, 2008, 2009), and ethnographical glocalism (Kraidy, 1999) and they have also extended glocalization as a new research methodology.

*Methodological glocalism*

In his book *Making Globalization*, Holton (2005) argued that given the fact that the multiple scales of global activity intersect, we need to reconsider the social analysis methodologies as methodological nationalism is out of date and methodological
globalism is inadequate. He proposed methodological glocalism, meaning the co-presence and interconnection of global and local. The procedure is to observe the inter-penetration of the two, in so many contexts from niche-market for businesses, to hybrid cultural forms such as world music, to the cosmopolitan perspectives. Holton further suggested that “to achieve this, however, would require that the awkward hybrid word ‘glocal’ would itself cross over into mainstream speech and discourse” (p. 191). Methodological glocalism is preferred also because it will permit a non-reductionist account of interaction between the multiple scales on which social action takes place. According to Holton, this approach gives a concreteness to ideas of the glocal that previous work has often lacked (2008, p. 200).

_A native ethnography of glocalization_

Marwan Kraidy was the first person who introduced glocalization to the field of communication studies. Kraidy empirically examined how Maronite youth in Lebanon articulate local practices and global discourses to enact hybridity. He concluded that “hybridity is not a contradiction of identity, but its quotidian, inevitable, systematic condition” (Kraidy, 1999, P. 462). Admitting the phenomenon of hybridity in a culture or in a locality, Kraidy advocated “native ethnography” as an adequate methodology. A halfie\(^{11}\) who has the cultural capital (with the lived experience of the local scene under study and the global discourse) is qualified to be a native ethnographer to articulate the intimate native knowledge with global discourses and to better understand hybridity.

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\(^{11}\) Halfies is a term coined by L. Abu-Lughod (1991) to refer to people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (Writing against culture, in R. Fox (eds.) Recapturing anthropology: Working in the present (pp. 137-162). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
Kraidy’s examination showed that hybridity of identities can be enacted through consumption, mimicry, and nomadism. He thus proposed to conceptualize hybridity as glocalization, which means that international communication should be re-formulated “beyond buoyant models of resistance and inauspicious patterns of domination” (Kraidy, 1999, 472). Kraidy (2001, 2003) proposed glocalization as a conceptual framework for understanding international communication in the information age.

The Significance of China’s Entry into the WTO

The historic event—China’s entry into the WTO in December 2001—is used as a lens to examine how Chinese individuals present themselves and how Chinese businesses communicate with their customers and investors in the globalized contexts from a historical approach. Technically speaking, China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 should be seen as China’s reentry into WTO because China was one of the original signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1948. Since China adopted the reform and opening-up policy in 1979, China has gradually deepened its participation into the process of economic globalization. However, it was not until 1986 that China eventually notified the GATT of its wish to resume its status as a GATT contracting party (www.WTO.org) in order to fully participate in the global economic cooperation. After nearly 15 years’ negotiation between China and the WTO, on December 11, 2001, China officially became a member of WTO and agreed to “undertake a series of important commitments to open and liberalize its regime in order to better integrate in the world economy and offer a more
predictable environment for trade and foreign investment in accordance with WTO rules” (www.wto.org).

WTO accession in China was seen as a strategic decision made by the Chinese government under economic globalization in line with the reform and opening-up policy. In the long negotiation process, the Chinese government mobilized the whole nation to prepare for the opportunities and challenges WTO would provide. Chinese companies in general had great hope that China’s compliance with WTO agreements and a rule-based system would eliminate many hurdles coming from the old planned economic system. For example, the company explicitly describes various measures (see figure 7.3) the Chinese government has taken to prepare for this historic event as a way to reassure investors that things would be better. Their optimism can be seen in the annual reports before 2002 (“The company expects that it would be able to benefit from such a favorable regulatory environment and achieve better financial results.”)

- **Regulatory environment will be further improved.**
  The PRC government is working on measures in preparation for China’s WTO entry with specific policies including the expansion of exports and foreign cooperation, effective utilisation of foreign capital, and greater efforts in customs control and curbing smuggling. The State Economic and Trade Commission has made it clear that in 2001 the suspension of gasoline and diesel imports will continue, and the import of fuel oil will be further standardised. The regulatory environment is expected to further improve the market order to endow fair competition. The Company expects that it would be able to benefit from such a favorable regulatory environment and achieve better financial results.

*Figure 7.3 capture of attitude toward WTO in the 2000 Sinopec report*
In the 2001 Sohu report, the CEO is assuring shareholders that Sohu is facing a dynamic market by saying that “general market conditions remain compelling in both short-term and long-term, supported by noteworthy events such as China’s accession to WTO…”

However, complying with all the WTO agreements cannot happen overnight. Companies gradually lost their enthusiasm and optimism about WTO and their annual reports show realism, and frustration as shown below. The following message did not appear once. It was recycled in each annual report and even in the last three years’.

Despite the challenges, on one hand, companies indeed enjoy the favorable environment, a rule-based system, and a fair international market; on the other, companies are more aware of and vocal about the global business environment, especially in the last two years when the global economy is experiencing a recession. The topics in the CEO’s letters in 2009 are evidences of Chinese companies’ participation in the global economy. After a few years’ experience within the WTO system, Chinese companies are no longer making direct associations between WTO and their participation in the global economy. WTO has lost its attention as it used to have especially right before China’s WTO accession and after. Now companies are taking for granted that they should enjoy participating in the global economy as an international player. Seldom do companies mention or give credits to WTO in either the CEO’s letter

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or the report. However, these companies have demonstrated their abilities in following international rules such as the SEC requirements, which basically proves the impact of WTO. Just because fulfilling their obligations is so fundamental, oftentimes it goes unnoticed. Here, I argue that we should consider Chinese companies’ efforts in following international rules as an impact of China’s entry into the WTO.

As an international player in the age of globalization, Chinese companies have benefited from collaborating with other companies and individuals outside China as well as the new talents who move globally. Most notably, more and more individuals are receiving overseas education in a western country. For example, both the Baidu CEO and the Sohu CEO received their graduate education in the U.S. and have had work experience in the U.S. before they moved back to China to start their businesses. Their communication styles bear both the imprint of Chinese traditions and thought pattern as well as the influence of American culture. They sometimes show the identity fluidity: their affiliation with both Chinese culture and American culture. I call this as a glocal business culture—showing national pride and appreciation for Chinese culture and meanwhile showing willingness to adopt new concepts and practices from western culture. Such fluidity is best explained with Appadurai’s cultural dimensions of globalization, especially his five “scapes” (Appadurai, 1996).

Unlike the western-educated CEOs from Sohu and Baidu, the Sinopec CEO, representing executives from a traditional state-owned enterprise, exhibits the typical Chinese communication style characterized by collectivism. In the letters, the Sinopec CEOs did not mention any individuals, whether a director or an employee. They gave
credits of achievements to the entire management team or leadership group. Therefore, no individuals stand out. The Chinese collectivism expects people to be modest. In contrast, both Baidu and Sohu CEOs named specific individuals and their contribution to the company in their letters in the hope that not only they are recognized by the company but also they may inspire more employees to work hard, catch up, and become “heroes.” This manifests what individualism focuses on. If we had followed the dominant research approach that applies attributes of China’s national culture, we would not have been able to explain individualism that we see in these annual reports. Therefore, we have to adopt a situated approach to studying intercultural communication at an individual level so that we can see the changes and we can explain the phenomenon with cultural contexts.

Learning from the communication styles popular in the U.S., Chinese company CEOs have mastered and practiced adopting the specifics-oriented communication style often seen in low-context cultures (Beamer & Varner, 2008). The letters present facts, details, and specific examples to illustrate what they meant by “attaching great importance to social and environmental issue,” and “contributing to community.”

**Conclusion**

Through examining actual Chinese professional communication practices across genres and in different historical contexts, we can safely say that Chinese individuals and companies have gone through the stage of rigidly conforming to the traditional North American resume and annual report writing conventions. They now begin to tactfully adapt the conventional North American practices to fit their specific contexts and innovatively create a new style—a glocalized version. Such a glocalized version can be
summarized this way: current Chinese professional communication practices glocalize western professional communication practices with unique Chinese characteristics, showing both the eagerness of adopting a universal practice and the innovation of creating a new style that representing a particular practice from China. The goal of such a glocalized version is to produce attractive and usable documents and provide compelling user experiences both cognitively and affectively.

With this understanding of current Chinese professional communication practices, we need to go back to the global research questions as outlined in the introduction to this study and see how this understanding prepares us for future discussions of international professional communication. Here are some suggestions:

Professional communication practices outside the U.S. will probably continue the trend of mostly adopting and following the U.S. model. No country or culture will completely ignore the U.S. practice and come up with something totally new and different. Local practitioners should not be taught when to follow and when to adapt. They will take initiatives to adjust the U.S. practice to fit the particular local contexts because they know their purposes and audiences better than outsiders. If documents are created in such a manner, assessments of such documents should also be context-based, instead of applying the U.S. standards for excellence universally. This way, we can not only enjoy the familiarity of U.S. professional communication practices, but also learn to appreciate the innovation and foreign elements of a practice outside the U.S. In the long run, appreciating and learning from each other may contribute to better and more
effective communication results in a global economy. This attitude will also lead to more and more glocal-minded citizens in the globalized context.
CHAPTER EIGHT
APPLICATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This chapter discusses the applications and implications of my research findings as well as the limitations of this study. I also suggest future research areas which are follow-ups of this study or new areas to explore in the field of international professional communication.

At the very beginning of this project, I defined international professional communication from both the research and teaching dimensions in the U.S. and China. The literature section followed this design pattern. Therefore, in this section I will first discuss the implications for both dimensions in two countries (including working with international students and preparing American students for global workplace), and then discuss the limitations of study as well as applications and suggestions for future research.

Implications for Future Teaching

Research should inform our teaching and training of future professional communicators. Here I am going to discuss some of the pedagogical applications of my research findings with focuses on how to work with our ever-increasing international student populations on the U.S. campuses as well as how to prepare traditional American students for the global workplace.

Working with international students in the U.S.

We have seen more and more Chinese students in our classes on U.S. campuses (People’s Daily, Higher education Nov. 15, 2009). As instructors, we have seen or will
see that many Chinese students do include such personal information in their resumes. We might have asked why. With the findings from this research, we have found the answers to the questions that have been puzzling us. Now we are able to explain the phenomenon with cultural motives and cultural context. With this understanding, it will be easier for us to explain to these Chinese students how to fix the problem themselves. It is an alternative way of understanding and applying audience analysis. Their original resumes could be used as examples to show American students how people in other countries and cultures design a resume or other documents. International students could be invited to share their resume-writing experience with their classmates. They may justify why certain items in a resume are crucial from a cultural perspective. Sometimes, they may not readily realize how to conform to a North American resume writing convention. By encouraging them to talk about their resume writing, they may begin to see why those items do not apply in a US-style resume. Instructors could also introduce those US laws that prohibit employers from discriminating against candidates on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. Understanding the legal grounds will enhance their mastery of the resume genre conventions in the US. Through such activities, both international students and domestic students could improve their cross-cultural understanding.

Many instructors may have already formed opinions that international students, Asian students in particular, are often very quiet in class, especially during class discussions. A combination of cultural differences, educational background, and language barriers accounts for this phenomenon. Some cultures prefer speaking up and
value individuality and creativity while other cultures may value conformity and authority. Some international students could have perfect TOEFL and GRE scores; however, they may still lack communicative skills in expressing themselves fully in both daily and academic situations. It could be challenging to discern which one factor may play a decisive role. Overemphasizing any single one may not lead to a satisfactory solution in terms of working with international students. The bottom line is that we need to be opened minded to show our appreciation for other faces, other cultures in our US classroom, not only respect differences, but also value them. I think this is how we prepare our students, both domestic and international, for the future global workplace.

I once was in a youth culture class when the subject was focused on how American children were raised. Without the “proper cultural capital (growing up in the US or raising a kid up in the US),” I was not able to join the conversation at all. My silence was initially interpreted as lack of language skills or interest in the subject. As a consequence, my participation grades hurt. To remedy this misinterpretation, I talked with my professor about my situation and she later encouraged me to take a cross-cultural approach to share my own experience growing up as a kid in China, which expanded our class conversation and helped both my classmates and my professor to know me better. In addition, it gave me confidence in myself when my own culture was given a consideration. Before that experience, for a long time, I felt I did not exist in the classroom and whatever I said or did was ignored and no one appreciated my contribution at all because they wanted a “pure” American experience.
Preparing American students for the global workplace

Once we know the current Chinese resume writing practices in China, we may substantiate our understanding and teaching of audience analysis, especially for international audiences, with more current developments. To test students’ understanding of analyzing international audience, we may design our typical job application assignments to require students to apply for an international job or internship. In this assignment students are required to demonstrate their understanding and their skills of how to apply what they have found about their audience to a particular situation instead of using any stereotyped information about people from a country or a culture. This assignment can be used in various professional communication courses that require students to apply their audience analysis skills. Typical courses like technical writing, business writing, international business communication can benefit from such an exercise. This could be one of the first assignments designed to expose students to glocalization: to see how global culture and local culture work together in affecting the business and writing practices in a particular region.

An international job application packet is a project that can be assigned for senior-level students who are taking a technical writing or business writing class. Students will be provided with a list of websites where organizations and companies outside the U.S. advertise for job openings. Then they are required to locate one valid position that they think they are qualified to fill, and apply for that position based on the requirements.

To successfully complete this assignment, American students may design a specific resume for a particular international job or internship or tweak an existing
generic resume to fit this particular rhetorical situation. If they choose to do the latter, they should keep in mind the cultural dimensions and cultural motives for including and excluding or repurposing certain items for better readability. I will use an example of an American student applying for a job in China to illustrate my points.

1. Physical features of a resume used for a Chinese job

First of all, this student may consider providing both an English version and a Chinese version of his/her resume if he/she is really serious about getting a job in China. The HR managers in traditional Chinese companies, both state-owned and privately run, are mostly native speakers of Chinese although they all have certain levels of English. Foreign-investment companies in China are often using polycentric staffing with “the argument that local managers are better able to communicate in the specific environment” (Beamer & Varner, 2008, p. 60) than ethnocentric staffing or geocentric staffing. The interviews I had with HR managers in China indicate that they prefer reading a Chinese resume because as native speakers of Chinese, reading resumes in Chinese saves them time and improves job efficiency. If this student does not know Chinese, he/she may need to consider using a career service translation agency or his/her Chinese friends for assistance in culturally translating his/her resume. In the cover letter or the transmittal letter, he/she should clearly explain how this is done.

Most probably this student will need to submit his/her resume online. If the company is not using any online submission forms, the student can email his/her resume as an attachment. Then he/she must consider the physical features of his/her resume. There is a chance that the HR manager wants to read a hard copy by printing this
attachment. Because all offices in China use A4 papers, measuring 210mm (=8.2") by 297mm (=11.69"), instead of the U.S. standard letter-sized paper, measuring 8.5" by11", this often-overlooked aspect may lead to a situation when the hiring manager gets frustrated and irritated because he/she cannot print the resume centered or without missing any information. If we compare the two paper sizes by placing one on top of the other with the top left hand corners touching, we can see that A4 is longer than letter paper, but letter paper is wider than A4. The safest way is to make sure that design or layout will be contained within 8.2" by 11". Addressing this slight difference in paper size, however, may make a candidate stand out. I would suggest this student to decrease the margins on both left and right sides so that an A4 paper can accommodate all information contained in the resume when printed. There are three places where the student should clearly inform the reader that paper size differences have been taken care of and the reader should be able to print with ease. These three places are: 1) in the cover letter right after “my resume is attached for your review,” 2) in the cover letter below the signature after “enclosure,” 3) in the transmittal email as a “postscript.” Doing so will tell the reader that the student has the audience awareness and is detail-oriented, which will leave a good first impression. The hiring manager may feel good to print the resume and read with interest in learning more about this candidate and may even infer that the candidate will be able to treat their customers with care. It’s the small things that make a difference.
2. Content area considerations for a resume used for a Chinese job

Aside from dealing with the physical features of a resume to be used for a job in China, the student also needs to adjust the resume contents to meet with the communication preferences and information expectations from HR managers. I suggest the student consider these areas and I also briefly explain why they should do so. The areas include: the applicant’s name, contact information, personal information, education, experience, and other skills. I even suggest the student add a self-evaluation section.

1) The applicant’s name

Often we say that the most important thing of a resume is the name of the candidate. Most native speakers of Chinese are not familiar with English names. The student is encouraged to choose a Chinese name for him/herself, or use the traditional Chinese translation for English names. The former will show to the employers that the student is so interested in China and Chinese culture so that they may think that the student may stay and work in China for a longer period of time. For a culture that stresses employer loyalty and job stability, this could be an effective rhetorical strategy. The latter is to clearly show that the applicant is expatriate, which is often a different category and given more interest and time. If the student insists on using his/her English name, I suggest providing any assistance to the reader on how to pronounce his/her name so that the HR manager has confidence in using that name correctly. This way the student may avoid the potential consequence of making the manager lose face by failing to pronounce the name correctly.
2) Contact information

With the advancement of technologies, the cell phone has achieved top status of staying in touch in China for phone calls and text messaging is often preferred for both personal and business communication. People in China even use text messaging to send wedding invitations (Sun, 2004). However, the cell phone is not a commonly used word in China. Chinese use “mobile phones” instead. Knowing this cultural context will help the student change the identifying section on a generic resume to fit the preferences and expectations of Chinese audience. The student should first list his/her mobile phone number with U.S. country code included. We cannot assume that all resume readers could remember a country code. U.S. mobile phone numbers (e.g. 864-650-6841) look the same as U.S. home phone numbers (e.g. 864-656-2655) while Chinese mobile phones (e.g. 13193379835) look quite different from a home phone number (029-87905168). Besides, neither Chinese cell phones nor home phones have the voice mail or answering machine function. Therefore, it is necessary to inform the reader that he/she could leave a message on either phone. Chances are the manager might send a text message to invite the applicant for an interview.

Email is another way to stay in touch especially in a bigger company. Home address may not be necessary because postal mail is often not preferred by companies especially for cross-Pacific communication. Time and cost are the main concerns. Besides, sending a rejection letter is not a common Chinese business practice. In high-context cultures like China, being silent without directly saying “no” often is a good indicator for rejection. If the student insists on having his/her physical address on the
resume, he/she should remember to use only one address and spell out all words like South Carolina instead of SC, Drive instead of “Dr”. Country name should be included as well.

3) Personal information

Different legal regulations of the employment process have a definite effect on employment communication in different countries. In the U.S., there are not only federal laws prohibiting job discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or candidates with disability, but also the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces all of these laws (http://www.eeoc.gov). In terms of national business culture, U.S. is a results- and performance-oriented culture. Companies often seek candidates who possess all the credentials and skills.

In China—a relationship and context oriented culture, companies not only look for candidates who can do the job, but also are interested in finding out if the candidate can be a colleague who “fits” the company. To do so, they relied on networks in the past to find the individual that the company can trust. Now companies require candidates to disclose enough personal information in the job application materials to assist the employers to find the right person for a position.

Because of the cultural differences, it is very difficult for Chinese to tell the age of an American or guess the gender based on an English name. However, such information is important in a hierarchical culture as it applies to interpersonal communication. To satisfy the curiosity of the employers, I suggest the student includes his/her date of birth and gender information. Providing a passport-sized photo and nationality is also highly
recommended. Hobbies and interests in art, music, and sports are often considered as useful information. Other personal information that may apply to Chinese candidates more like hukou, political affiliation, ethnicity, health, marital status is optional.

4) Education section

Chinese often say that education makes a man. So the student needs to put this section on the top. All Chinese universities still use the national college entrance exam scores to admit students. The higher scores a high school graduate makes, the better schools he/she can attend. The trick is that resume readers only know a very limited number of good schools in the U.S. such as Harvard, MIT, Yale, etc. If the student graduates from a good liberal arts college while the readers do not know the name of the college at all, the applicant will be in a disadvantageous position compared with a candidate who graduates from even a community college that bears a U.S. place name that can be recognized by Chinese easily. If that is the case, the student needs to explain the school, the program, or one or two professors. An easier way to deal with this situation is to provide the ranking of the school. I recommend moving scholarship and award information into this section to supplement educational background. HR managers I interviewed believe that good students will become good employees.

In the U.S., GPA is used as an important indicator for academic achievements. However, Chinese are not familiar with GPA at all. Leaving GPA out is probably a good choice. If the student has a good GPA and insists in including it, it is very important to indicate it is 3.75 out of 4.00. Chinese are used to decimal system. Without “out of 4.00”, it could easily be interpreted as 3.75 out of 10, which makes a huge difference.
Other GPA related terms such as Dean’s list, President’s roll, Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, or Cum Laude are cultural aspects that the student needs to consider to translate culturally because they do not exist in Chinese higher education systems.

5) Experience section

This might be the section the student needs the least adjustment because current Chinese resume writing has fully embraced this American style by providing all the specifics and using action verbs. For technical positions here in the U.S., the student may not include experience as a seasonal worker or a part-timer in a fast-food or retail business on the resume. However, Disney, Wal-mart, Pizza-hut, KFC, Starbucks, McDonald may mean quite different things to a Chinese reader. They are considered as big American companies. The experience, skills used, and trainings received from these big U.S. companies may be considered as transferrable skills, which adds weight to the resume.

6) Other skills

Often Chinese see English as an international language in the workplace. In the age of globalization, Chinese focus on English language skills and computer skills. People will take for granted that the student is a native speaker of English if he/she is from the U.S. I encourage the student to write down other language skills as well, Spanish, French, German or whatever language that applies to the student. If the student has taken a Chinese 101 class, by all means he/she should include this information to
show his/her Chinese language proficiency. It may not the real language proficiency that matters; rather it is the attitude and open-mindedness that make a difference.

I would think whether to list computer skills in detail is optional. U.S. is considered as a highly technologically advanced country. The assumption is that everyone in the U.S. knows how to use computers. Of course, it depends on the job position. If it is a computer-related position, the student needs to be very specific about the exact operating systems, programming languages, and software applications.

7) Self-evaluation

“Self-evaluation” is a new item for the student to consider. The section provides a narrative argument that the person is a good fit for this position. The readers want to see how the candidate will position him/herself in the organization. It combines the functions of a cover letter as used in the U.S., objective statement, and a traditional Chinese behavior—being modest. Therefore, the key is to balance the self-confidence and modesty.

For American students, a good rhetorical strategy to use in this section is to demonstrate the interest in China, Chinese language, and Chinese culture by making a connection between China and this job. It will be appropriate to talk about travelling in China, making Chinese friends, learning Chinese calligraphy, and even eating Chinese food. The goal is to show the seriousness in going to China and working in a Chinese company.
8) References

Since Chinese resumes do not include this section, I suggest leaving the list of references out in a resume. In a relationship-orientated culture, all the names on this list may be considered as friends who will only say favorable things about the candidate. Employers may want to spend time to find out a reference person from other channels rather than relying on this self-composed and selective list. Another reason HR managers will not consider this list if all the names on this list are non-Chinese. Both trust and language barrier are concerns. If the student can list a Chinese professor as a reference, probably there is a need for such a list on this resume.

To conclude, if an American student can study the job ad and the company carefully and follow all the principles suggested here to design or repurpose his/her resume for a job in China, it demonstrates fully to the HR managers that he/she is interested in and sensitive to Chinese culture. This way the HR managers will think that he/she is an exceptional applicant, thus a better chance of receiving an interview invitation.

Using annual reports in professional communication classes

There is also pedagogical value in examining annual reports in professional communication classes. Learning from the business schools’ experience of using a case study approach, we may consider using annual reports in professional communication classrooms so that we can make the course immediately relevant to the workplace. It is even possible to use annual reports to replace a conventional textbook on workplace communication. The course can be designed to teach the fundamental principles of
audience and purpose analysis, document design, visual analysis, professional communication styles, ethics in workplace communication, rhetorical situation, persuasion, and genre analysis. Through analyzing existing and publicly available corporate communication documents, professional communication students will grasp skills needed to identify and create usable, readable, and ethical corporate communication. International/intercultural business communication can benefit from having current, specific, and concrete examples using annual reports to discuss the effectiveness of intercultural communication. This is in agreement with Matveeva’s assertion that technical communication textbooks should provide an adequate number of sample documents from other cultures in addition to lists of guidelines or tips (2007, p.157).

Here I provide an outline of various classroom activities using annual reports as a tool in professional communication classes.

Using annual reports in a professional communication classroom gives students an opportunity to explore “the power of effective rhetoric in not only projecting a positive and accurate corporate ethos but also, when abused in deceptive games of smoke and mirrors, in destroying the framework of trust upon which our financial system depends” (Hager & Scheiber, 1990, p. 113). Students can examine what rhetorical strategies companies are using in promoting a corporate image. They can evaluate the effectiveness and ethics of such uses.

In addition to the rhetorical and ethical aspects, annual reports can also be used to teach professional writing style. By examining annual reports created by U.S.-based
domestic companies and US-listed international companies, students can discover for themselves what professional writing looks like, how it differs from culture to culture despite the fact that they are all written in the same language, why it is constructed in certain ways, and how the writing reflects the cultural backgrounds.

Exercises can also be designed to help students understand the importance of analyzing audience and purpose of corporation communication. With the easy access to authentic materials, students can compare different sections of an annual report to understand the differences in organizational patterns, and how different information needs from various audiences are met in each section in content, format, and language use such as the use of personal pronouns and “you-attitude” in business communication.

Document design is another important aspect students can learn from examining annual reports in a professional communication class. The specific areas may include, but are not limited to, how to assist readers in navigating a multiple-page report, how to use design elements to provide header and footer information to orient readers, how to maintain consistency among sections, how to use and introduce visuals (images, tables, graphs, charts, etc) in business texts and how to describe and explain visuals used and how to integrate visuals into texts, and how to create appealing cover pages to engage readers.

Students can also learn how to format and draft persuasive messages in requesting a hard copy of a corporate annual report, how to evaluate if the report writing demonstrates compliance with laws and regulations as part of corporate communication,
how to ethically and effectively communicate “bad news”, and how to detect companies’ intention in not disclosing certain information.

Limitations of the Research

Grounded theory is not a brand new qualitative research method; however, its focus on the process of data collection and data analysis to develop a theory differs so much from other research methods which test or verify a theory that its value has been underappreciated. Sometimes grounded theory is seen by inexperienced researchers as a “theory without a theory.” Simplistic as it is understood, grounded theory has been used and accepted in the field of professional communication by a few scholars as a valuable empirical research tool to uncover the uncharted field of international /intercultural professional communication. With it, there is hope that we can develop rich international /intercultural professional communication literature based on data and empirical research rather than speculations resulting from theoretical works or teacher lore (Scott, 2010, p. 86).

In this dissertation, the most obvious limitation is seen on the instruction and manual writing. Exploration of Chinese instructions and manual writing could not even go on according to the same research design laid out early in the study because of the uncertainties of who is creating the documents. Future research could start from interviewing current technical writers in China who are drafting, designing, or editing instructions and manuals in Chinese household appliance manufacturing companies such as Haier and Midea. Doing so will help us better understand the entire process involved in producing these types of documents in China. After we know the working process and
the individuals involved, we may then study the writing products to see how technical writers are doing what they are planning to achieve. The study can also be triangulated by testing and researching the perceptions of consumers who use the instructions/manuals to perform tasks.

Another limitation was the difficulty in seeing the potential differences in genre between resumes from state and private companies. From the interviews I conducted in this project, I learned that state companies prefer candidates with information about party affiliation while private companies do not care much because many private companies do not have a presence of the communist party within the company. I think that this could be a good research question for the future. My current research design and my data collection process do not lead to such a conclusion about the differences in genre between state and private companies. A different research design would be to examine resumes created by the same applicant when he/she sent resumes to both state and private companies. That way we can see the rhetorical strategies adopted by the same applicant in approaching two different audiences. The differences we see in my data may show more personal preference or personal capability rather than logical and rhetorical choices.

It was a surprise that ownership does not affect the overall design and organization of a resume very much. A comparatively small sample from the foreign-invested enterprise made it difficult to draw a conclusion. That is why most of the conclusions were from the state-owned and the privately-run enterprises. Future research may avoid this by selecting the same number of documents from each group. To see the subtle difference between the three types of enterprises in China in terms of resume
practice, research can be designed by using one job search website, selecting one advanced-level position that may exist in all enterprises, with similar job ads, to see if similar results exist.

Analyzing only the English version of a resume and not the Chinese version is another limitation. If the focus of the research were to compare two versions (English and Chinese) of a resume written by a Chinese, I would have more confidence in addressing the extent to which English language changes the topics covered in a resume and the rhetorical strategies adopted by individual candidates in various cultural contexts. However, I do see a few unique items in an English resume, for example, using an English name and listing internship, which are surely associated with the English language use and the globalizing society we are living in.

A grounded theory study of the annual reports by China-based companies is informative as this approach tells us how Chinese companies are complying with the SEC regulations and how these companies are introducing themselves to international investors. However, we are unable to find out how that creation process went and how effective their writing and design is. Usability testing of American stockholders and investors’ perception and responses to U.S.-listed Chinese companies’ annual reports will inform us and corporate report writers what strategy is effective, what aspects of an annual report are better understood, what items need to be better translated culturally, and what cultural designs need to be reconsidered.

**Implications and Suggestions for Future Research**

Several avenues of future research emerge when research findings were analyzed
and discussed. First, a longitudinal study of company annual reports is desirable for a better understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of an annual report. The wide availability and easy access to a company’s annual reports presents affordable possibilities for conducting long-term study. For example, the consistent use of images with unique Chinese characteristics and implied meanings on the cover page of Baidu’s annual reports entices me to look forward to reading and analyzing next year’s annual report.

Conducting cross-cultural study of annual reports by companies involved in the same industry, but located in China and outside China, for example, Baidu and Google, may lead to more information on how culture affects communication, especially in the era of globalization. In addition, researchers may also find it exciting to examine correlations between the design and content of annual report and corporate performance.

Another line of inquiry is to conduct two longitudinal comparative case studies of two Chinese companies by examining their respective hiring policies and processes, their communication processes with their customers, users, general public, and investors with a close look at resumes, instructions/manuals, press releases, annual reports. Such research can be triangulated by interviewing both these document writers and producers and the target readers or users of each document. Interview data will lead to an insider’s perspective on the design motives, strategies, expectations and usability tests will examine the effectiveness of these design strategies used by these companies in reaching their stockholders.
Given the fact that we still do not know much about professional communication practices outside the U.S., the grounded theory approach is warranted to explore the current status of professional communication in many countries, particularly the other BRIC countries as Brazil, Russia, India, and Germany, France, South Africa, South Korea. Different workplace communication genres and subgenres can be studied, for example, promotional writing (including resumes, sales letters, brochures, and company websites), workplace correspondence, instructions, proposals, and reports. As a start, data can be collected and analyzed by following grounded theory protocols. The emergent theory from a grounded theory analysis will inform us of the current practices. The findings do not need to be verified or confirmed because they come from data directly. More data will be collected later to amend and update the emergent theory until it is much closer to providing a broadly applicable theory.

We have to keep in mind that communication in the globalizing society is a complex process. Researchers may consider triangulation in researching the production, message, and reception contexts of international professional communication, and triangulation in research methods (survey, ethnographical observation, case study, and interview). Adopting more creative, multimethodological approaches reaffirms “the necessity of interdisciplinary borrowing, methodological diversity, and collaborative research” (Kraidy, 2003, p. 43). Only multimethodological studies may promise to yield complete data presenting a holistic view of the communication phenomenon under study.

Through examining professional communication products, in this case, resumes and annual reports in China, we have not only gotten a sense of the current practices but
also achieved a better understanding of the influencing /contributing factors of such practices. The findings contribute to mapping out the trajectory of professional communication in China. I hope this document study has proved that grounded theory is a very informative approach. Studies can be conducted in the same spirit in other cultures/countries. This way, we may compare the trajectories and achieve a more vivid, and accurate picture of international professional communication research and practice.

Only after we know how the rest of world is conducting their professional communication can we consider doing comparative studies in the true sense. This way we can avoid the mistake of comparing an apple in the U.S. with an orange in China. This way we know what they have, what our strengths are, and then probably we can find a niche. Probably this is what Nancy Hoft really meant by “reengineer technical communication for international use” although she did not specify in her book. We might also see better chances for collaboration. Ideally we need bilingual, bicultural, or polyglot researchers to start the dialogic collaboration.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Initial Coding Example

Dear Shareholders:

I am pleased to share with you the results of another successful year for Sohu. In 2009, our management team was once again able to successfully execute our business strategies across all core business segments, delivering solid financial results and enhancing value for shareholders, even in challenging economic conditions. Both our portal and online game businesses continued to grow, finding new and innovative ways to reach out to users and advertisers. Our success did not go unnoticed – Fortune Magazine ranked Sohu the third fastest growing U.S. listed company in August 2009, based on our financial performance over the past three years. Going forward, we will make ongoing investments in content, technology and marketing that will strengthen our position as a leading mainstream media platform in China.

One of the highlights of 2009 for our company was the highly successful initial public offering (IPO) of Changyou.com, our massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) subsidiary, on the NASDAQ Global Select Market. The landmark IPO overcame a number of challenges during a particularly difficult time in the global capital markets, winning The Asset magazine’s “Triple A Regional Award” for Best ADR Equity Deal/IPO of 2009. The successful execution of the IPO and continued growth and development of the online games business speaks to the strategic vision and execution capabilities of our management team.

In 2009, we further bolstered our management team with the promotion of Delinda Wang and Xiaochuan Wang to Sohu’s Chief Operating Officer and Chief Technology Officer, respectively. At Changyou, Mr. Dewen Chen, the company’s Chief Operating Officer, took on the additional role of President. We also promoted three more vice-presidents at Sohu, namely Lin Zhiou, Vice President of Technology; Wei Yu, Vice President of Media; and Ye Dong, Vice President of Entertainment Media to expand our core management team. These promotions reflect the continued and valued contributions of these individuals and strengthen the Sohu group’s leadership team.

2009 Financial Highlights

Sohu’s 2009 financial results are a testament to our emphasis on the application of new, highly desired and differentiated content, technological innovation, and an ability to maintain and grow user loyalty. Our total revenues reached a record high of $151.2 million, up 20% compared to 2008 – an impressive year-over-year gain considering the soft economic climate and strong revenue contribution from consumer demand related to the Beijing Olympic Games in the previous year. Our balance sheet remained clean of debt. After the successful stock repurchasing of U.S.$40 million in the fourth quarter of 2009, our cash balance as of December 31, 2009 was over $560 million.

Portal Business

Our focus on high definition video content differentiated our offerings and drove new viewers to our platform. Our proactive steps to battle online piracy have led many local video sites to remove their pirated content and provided us with ample opportunities to expand user base and increase advertising revenue. Our proactive efforts brings Sohu to become the partner of choice for many leading local and global media companies, resulting in new opportunities to offer impressive and differentiated licensed content from around the world to our users.

With our continuous technological development and marketing efforts, Sogou Pinyin has been installed on 80% of personal computers in China. The introduction of cloud computing technology to Sogou Pinyin helps high definition OCR, further cementing its leading market position with revolutionary input preciseness. In addition, the mobile version of Sogou Pinyin is also increasing in popularity. Sogou Pinyin’s large market share affords us the opportunity to cross-market Sohu’s other products which will help attract more users to the Sohu platform.
Online Games

Our independently listed online gaming subsidiary, Changyou, enjoyed solid growth in 2009. The highlight of the year was clearly the successful IPO in April 2009. However, we were also able to push through a number of strategic and operating initiatives that helped generate record returns in the company's history.

Our periodic releases of new game updates and continued focus on enhancing our users’ in-game experience further enlarged our user base. Aggregate registered users grew strongly over the same quarter last year, increasing by over 40% year-over-year to 80.9 million in the fourth quarter of 2009. Aggregate peak concurrent users (PCU) for our games also expanded, growing by 19% from the same quarter last year to 990,000 in the fourth quarter of 2009. Aggregate active paying accounts (APA) reached 2.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2009, an increase of more than 20% over the same quarter last year.

Our existing games, consisting of our flagship game Tian Long Ba Bu (TLBB), two games in the Blade Online series, and Da Hua Shi Hu continue to gain traction amongst users while reflecting positive growth momentum. TLBB remains one of the most popular games in China, providing a solid revenue base for funding growth in our other existing and pipeline games.

We have a diverse pipeline of games, including our in-house developed title, Duke of Mount Deer (DMD), as well as a suite of high-quality 2D and 3D licensed games. We look forward to a bright future, as our successful user-centric game development platform, innovative games and new technologies will firmly establish Changyou in key market sub-segments and deliver additional growth in the coming years.

Stock Repurchase Program

Between October 2008 and December 31, 2009, we purchased a total of 1,252,910 Sohu shares in the open market at an average price of US$47.89 for a total consideration of US$60 million. This completed the stock repurchase program we announced in October 2008.

2009 was a year of achievements and growth for Sohu in challenging market conditions. We were able to successfully demonstrate the success of our long-term strategic vision to be a leading internet company. As the economy marches toward recovery, we will remain focused on and dedicated to the growth and enhancement of shareholder value. I thank you, our shareholders, for your ongoing support, and look forward to communicating further growth and success in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Charles Zhang
Chairman and CEO
Sohu.com

This announcement contains forward-looking statements. It is currently expected that the Business Outlook will not be updated until release of Sohu's next quarterly earnings announcement; however, Sohu reserves right to update its Business Outlook at any time for any reason. Statements that are not historical facts, including statements about Sohu's beliefs and expectations, are forward-looking statements. These statements are based on current plans, estimates and projections, and therefore you should not place undue reliance on them. Forward-looking statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Sohu cautions you that a number of important factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in any forward-looking statement. Potential risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, the current global financial
Appendix D

Sohu 2008 Annual Report Cover Pages
Unrivaled Competitive Advantage

Our sponsorship of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the successful implementation of our media strategy resulted in increased awareness of Sohu’s distinct portal strength and further elevated the Sohu brand. Through our first hand reporting on this high-profile international event, we engaged in corporate brand building on a global stage. Sohu emerged as the undisputed “Portal of Choice” and we made profound progress in both attracting new users and retaining existing users.

At the same time, we generated so much “buzz” and enthusiasm for the brand through our nationwide marketing campaign, that we drove increased traffic to our portal. During the Olympic period, the number of daily unique visitors grew by more than 100%, and most of these users have stayed with Sohu due to the appeal of our premium content and power of our preeminent brand.
Sohu’s focus on technology development and innovation has enabled us to create an overall user experience that is unmatched by any other portal.

To further distance Sohu from the competition, we upgraded Sohu Blog to build a community-based personalized space and further integrated the Blog within our web matrix. Our disciplined focus on developing Sogou Pinyin has resulted in a popular usage by computer users. Tian Long Ba Bu, in its seventh quarter of operations by the end of 2008, has more than 44 million registered users in Mainland China and is being exported overseas. A revitalized Blade Online continues to demonstrate sustained growth and retain user interest. Our focus on technology has enabled us to develop truly round breaking products that have fueled user stickiness to our portal, and increased the enjoyment and satisfaction of our users.
Appendix F

Baidu 2005 Annual Report
Focus is knowing how to sort through the clutter.
Focus is knowing some choices aren’t right for the big picture.
At Baidu, we focus on serving the rapidly growing Chinese search market.
Decoding Baidu

6 years old

No. 1 Chinese language search engine

No. 1 Internet traffic site in China

Largest Chinese web index with over 1 billion pages

Serving a market with over 100 million Internet users

Over 76,000 Online Marketing Customers in 2005

and counting...

Baidu.com, Inc. is the leading Chinese language Internet search provider. As a technology-based media company, Baidu aims to provide the best way for people to find information. In addition to serving individual Internet search users, Baidu provides an effective online marketing platform for businesses to reach potential customers.
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From The CEO

Dear Baidu Shareholders,

I am pleased to be writing my first letter to you in this, Baidu's first annual report. It gives me tremendous pleasure to share with you the remarkable progress that we have achieved since Baidu became a public company on August 5th, 2005. We have strengthened our leadership position by serving significantly more Chinese Internet users and online marketing customers than any of our peers. Our brand has become even stronger, and our financial results have been outstanding. All of this, in my view, is the direct result of our sheer focus on Chinese search, which is unmatched by any other provider. Since founding Baidu over six years ago, we have been focusing on providing Chinese Internet search users with the best search experience possible. We remain fully committed to our mission of providing the best way for people to find information.

Many people ask me how Baidu can be so successful in this lucrative yet competitive search market. I believe it has less to do with any secret formula and more to do with us being more focused and having developed a far more profound understanding of both users and the search market in our part of the world. We have accumulated more insights into Chinese language and culture, and have done a better job of combining these insights with our state-of-the-art proprietary search algorithm than anyone else. Our attention to detail has enabled us to win the trust and loyalty of tens of millions of Chinese Internet users.

From the beginning, we have understood that the Internet is as much about culture as it is about technology. Just as Chinese people's tastes in cars, clothes, movies and food are different from those of their counterparts in the U.S., so is the way in which Chinese people use the Internet to search for information, to communicate, and to conduct business.

At Baidu we firmly believe that the company which will ultimately succeed in search will need to have real local know-how, effective execution, and the ability to connect with its users and customers on a personal and community level. I am very pleased that our users appreciate our mission and effort. Their support and appreciation has made Baidu the search engine of choice in China.

In the remaining part of the letter, I would like to share with you some important developments on various aspects of our business in 2005.

2005 Financial Snapshot

We achieved outstanding financial results in 2005 driven by solid traffic growth, customer base expansion and the scalability inherent in our pay-for-performance (P4P) business model. We are proud to have delivered a strong bottom line while making significant investments in technology, marketing, distribution infrastructure and human resources.
Full year 2005 total revenue was RMB1319 million, representing a 172 percent increase from 2004, and our full year net income in 2005 on a GAAP basis increased almost 300 percent year-over-year to RMB48 million.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>For the year ended December 31</th>
<th>FY 2005</th>
<th>FY 2004</th>
<th>% Y-o-Y Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>172%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>297%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income (excl. SBC)</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>185%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted EBITDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic EPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diluted EPS</td>
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<td>245%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic EPS (excl. SBC)</td>
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<td>2.60</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diluted EPS (excl. SBC)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Amounts in millions of RMB, except where otherwise indicated)

User Traffic Growth
In 2005, we continued to extend our lead as China’s number one search engine. According to a January 2006 survey by iResearch, an independent research firm in China, 56.6 percent of Chinese search users most frequently chose Baidu to conduct Internet searches in 2005 as compared with 44.7 percent in 2004. The survey also indicated that the gap between Baidu and the competition is widening.

Also in 2005, Baidu.com became the most trafficked website in China and the 4th most trafficked website in the world, according to Alexa.com.

Customer Base Expansion
During the year, our online marketing products and services continue to grow in popularity as Chinese businesses become more aware of the superb return-on-investment of our P4P model and the effectiveness of keyword marketing. The number of active online marketing customers we served during 2005 was more than 76,000 versus 34,600 in 2004; and annual average revenue per customer increased to RMB4,200 from RMB3,083 in the previous year.

Products and Services
“We seek to offer the number one product in every category, because this means we are offering the best user experience.”

All of our R&D and new product development efforts start with two questions: What do our users and customers want? What do they mean when they say they want something? For example, Baidu Post Bar, a popular query-based online community system invented by Baidu, has been doing very well because it fulfills users’ need to feel connected to a community when they search for information. It is very easy to use and millions of messages are posted on Baidu Post Bar everyday.

Our knowledge-based search product, Baidu Knows, launched in June 2005, is now the number one knowledge search tool in China. These user driven products and services have helped us create the leading search experience. By the same token,

Non-GAAP Measures:
1. Net Income excluding share-based compensation expenses
2. Adjusted EBITDA defined as earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, amortization, other non-operating income and share-based compensation expenses
3. Basic EPS excluding share-based compensation expenses
4. Diluted EPS excluding share-based compensation expenses
we have become the largest performance-based online marketing platform in China because of our determination to offer the most effective medium for our customers.

Investing for the Future

Baidu is only six years old. It is growing up with the Internet market, and investments are necessary to capture future opportunities. In 2005, we made significant investments in technology, marketing, distribution infrastructure and human resources.

We constantly fine-tuned our technology to enhance user experience, introducing a series of products that addressed user needs. We completed a major network upgrade to accommodate our ever-growing search traffic. We launched marketing campaigns that strengthened both the Baidu brand and the awareness of keyword marketing. We increased overall distribution and customer service capacity by setting up additional direct sales offices and expanding our distributor network.

And most importantly, we brought together the right teams that understand this market and created a work environment that fosters creativity and a sense of belonging. I am proud to note that, beyond achieving success in business, we are building a great place to work. Baidu was named one of the Top 10 Employers of the year in 2005 by China Central Television.

We have begun building a new headquarters in the hub of Beijing's Shangdi Technology and Information District, home to many innovative and upbeat IT companies.

Confidence in the Future

Despite the remarkable strides we have made in the short period of our existence, we are well aware that we are still at the beginning of our journey to becoming a great enterprise in one of the world's largest economies. Even though the Chinese search market has been growing rapidly over the past few years, with just 8.5 percent Internet penetration and only over 2 percent of businesses doing online promotion in 2005, there are many more years of growth ahead. I am confident that the combination of Baidu's deep affinity with Chinese Internet users and our ability to provide an effective marketing platform for our customers places us in the perfect position to capitalize on this exciting period of growth and development.

I always tell people that Baidu is a very focused company. We are focused on our core competency and we are focused on the long-term. 2005 was a great year for Baidu, but we are certain that the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

Robin Li
Chairman and CEO
Baidu.com, Inc.

1. Source: CNRRC, January 2006 Report
Board of Directors

Robin Li
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Baidu.com, Inc.

William Decker
Senior Partner
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
An international accounting firm

James Ding
Chairman
Ascent Holdings, Inc.
A telecom software solutions and security products and services provider in China

Asael Jamal
Co-Chairman and Managing Director
Stein Eventus Ventures
A venture capital firm in Silicon Valley

Greg Penner
General Partner
Foothill Capital Partners
An investment firm based in California

Committees of the Board

Audit Committee
Decker (Chairman), Ding, Penner

Compensation Committee
Ding, Penner

Corporate Governance and Nominating Committee
Ding, Penner

Executive Officers

(From left to right: David, Robin, Jerry, Shawn and Dong)

Robin Li
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

"I firmly believe that success lies many years ahead of today’s achievements."

Shawn Wang
Chief Financial Officer

"We are encouraged by our achievements thus far, and we remain committed to investing for the long-term."

David Zhu
Chief Operating Officer

"Local know-how and effective execution is what it takes to win in China. We have the right people to make this happen."

Jerry Liu
Chief Technology Officer

"Our unrelenting pursuit of technological leadership serves only one purpose—superior user experience."

Dong Liang
Vice President, Marketing

"2005 was the year of the Baidu brand. In Chinese, Baidu has become the verb for search."
Focus, is understanding where to make the next stitch.
Our focus enables us to see the complete picture before others can.
Stitch by stitch, Baidu creates the future.
Appendix G

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Appendix K

Interview Questions Used in the Resume Research

2. Do you often receive resume applications via email?
3. Do you often receive hard-copy resumes sent to you via snail mail or submitted in person at a job fair? Do you often see resumes printed on fancy and colorful resume papers?
5. Do you often see resumes presented in both English and Chinese? Is the English just a linguistic translation of the Chinese version?
6. Do you often see such personal information on an English resume: name, gender, age (date of birth), place of birth, ancestral origin, place of residency, photograph of the applicant, height, weight, ethnicity, political status, marital status?
7. Do you see resumes that often highlight the school the candidate is graduating from, his/her major, GPA, foreign language skills, computer skills, hobbies, awards, certificates?
8. Do you often see resumes with the names/logos of the university the candidate is graduating from or the university specific resume templates? Do you like it?
9. Do you often see resumes with unique designs created by the applicants themselves?
10. Do you often see resumes with similar designs as if they were downloaded templates from a website? Do you like these templates?
11. What constitutes a winning resume?
12. What procedures do you use in screening the resumes?
REFERENCES


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