

## THE ENGLISH GRADUATION BENCHMARK POLICY IN TAIWAN

Dr. Li-Jiuan Tsay\*

### **Abstract**

Since Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE) started to encourage universities to establish English graduation benchmarks (EGB) in 2002, the policy has gradually become a standardized requirement for many universities. Although numerous researches were subsequently conducted (Su, 2009; Lin, 2010), further studies on the pedagogical implications of this implementation have not been given much attention. Hence, the purpose of this study is to offer pedagogical suggestions for the policy makers of this implementation through the analyses of the findings from two investigations, and from related literature. The two investigations focused on both students' and teachers' attitudes in various dimensions toward the EGB policy. Finally, the results are revealed and the pedagogical implications are offered. If all of the learning circumstances and students' needs analyses are not taken into account, once the EGB policy is fully implemented, a major challenge will be posed to English teachers, administrators and students in the future.

Keywords: English graduation benchmark, language policy, pedagogical implication, standardized test

\* Chair, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Applied English, Ming Chuan University, Tao-Yuan Campus

## Introduction

“It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that evaluation and testing have become the engine for implementing educational policy (Petrie, 1987, p.175).”

With the rapid development of globalization, English language learning has become a widely spread “fever” (Krashen, 2006) and “national obsession” (Liu, 2002) for many learners and parents in Taiwan. With the advent of globalization, English has become a basic skill to possess for global citizens in many non-English-speaking countries. As Graddol (2006) pointed out, countries like Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines have expressed strong anxiety about improving their national proficiency in English and have taken new educational initiatives. However, according to some research findings, English performance in general in Taiwan is not satisfactory. Among the 28 Asian countries, Taiwan’s TOEFL score ranked 25<sup>th</sup>, and among the 20 countries which have the largest number of test-takers taking the IELTS in 2006, Taiwanese were ranked 17<sup>th</sup> (Chang, 2007).

According to data provided by the MOE, in 2006, 53 universities had set up graduation benchmarks, and by 2008, the number had gone up to 67. In 2011, there were more than 100 schools implementing English proficiency tests as a graduation benchmark. One aim of the MOE’s (2002) ‘Grant Project on the Enhancement of Students’ Foreign Language Proficiency’ is to enforce graduation standard control, which requires graduates to achieve a certain standard before they can graduate from their programs. In 2002, the MOE began to encourage colleges and universities to establish English proficiency graduation benchmarks in an attempt to enhance college students’ competitiveness and to prepare them for the demands of the workforce after graduating from schools. The English graduation benchmark is also known as the English Exit Exam or the graduation threshold.

The educational system in Taiwan has moved from a highly selective elite system to one providing nine years of compulsory education. With the lifting of martial law in 1968, the compulsory education system was extended from six to nine years: six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. Upon the completion of compulsory education, two

streams of education are offered to students: academic and vocational. Students within the academic track are better at theoretical tasks and later may enter general universities, while those in the vocational track are more skillful in practical subjects and later may enter universities of technology. Because of different levels of attainment of English learning, students' English proficiency in these two systems differentiates gradually and unceasingly. Table 1 indicates students' different levels of English proficiency in two streams of schools.

Table 1. *Numbers of test-takers and their average scores among general universities and technical universities from 2007 to 2010.*

	Universities	No. of test-takers	Average scores
2010	GU	80,302	582
	TU	38,118	427
2009	GU	61,376	577
	TU	27,940	429
2008	GU	79,897	570
	TU	33,519	424
2007	GU	62,973	535
	TU	27,257	468

*GU: General universities; TU: Technical universities.*

(Source: from TOEIC test Centre)

Although more than two-thirds of universities have set up an English graduation benchmark, the levels of implementation vary from one to another. Some are very strict about this policy while many have set up a “back-door” policy, such as remedial courses for those who cannot meet the requirement (Su, 2009). The most commonly used tests to evaluate students' English proficiency are the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) with about 290,000 examinees, and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) with 197,463 examinees in 2010 in Taiwan. The TOEIC Centre in Taiwan claimed that the average score of test-takers was 13 points higher in 2007 than in the previous year. However, according to Table

1, in 2008, when the number of test-takers increased by 18.6%, the average score dropped 24.2 points. In 2009, although the average score of all test-takers increased 6.2 points, the number of students below 24 years old actually decreased. The general average ages for university students was between 19 and 23.

Table 2. *Statistical report of TOEIC results between 2006 and 2010.*

Year	A=No. of Test-takers	Average score of A	B=% Below 24 yrs in A	Average score of B
2010	197,463	544	63% (Students 59%)	529
2009	162,968	540	57% (Students 51%)	527
2008	186,649	533.8	53% (Students 49%)	494
2007	141,740	558	30% (N/A)	551
2006	84,147	545	27% (N/A)	528

(Source: from TOEIC Test Centre)

Does the implementation of the EGB help promote students' English abilities, or does it actually make the test-driven situation in Taiwan worse and even cause some negative washback effects? Between what is learned and what is taught and tested, there exists a mutual influence. As reported by Educational Testing service in 2007, the average TOEIC score of Taiwanese people ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among 10 Asian countries. Hence, the need for re-examining the implementation of EGB policies urges.

EGB requirements vary based on the level of English proficiency that each university has set, ranging from TOEIC 750 to TOEIC 450. As a result, much attention has centred upon the assessment of students' English proficiency as well as the establishment of the graduation benchmarks. In Su's (2005) research, more and more institutes have set up English proficiency graduation benchmarks in face of the trends and needs in society as well as industry. However, students go into a university with different levels of English proficiency, and thus setting up a fixed score for all students has even violated the Confucian educational philosophy. According to Tsai and Tsou (2009), the evaluation of student achievement outcomes "should be determined on

the basis of students' English competence and learning situations and implemented in the context of overall curriculum planning and needs analysis" (p.319).

Hence, in order to find out the answers to the research questions, both students' and teachers' attitudes toward EGB are examined.

## Method

*Investigation I: Changes in Students' attitudes toward the English graduation benchmark.*

In order to find out whether EGB implementation has had an impact on students' learning, their attitudes toward the policy were investigated. Students' attitude toward EGB are categorized as students' attitude toward the EGB policy, their attitude toward remedial courses/ make-up measure, the washback on their affective factors, and their perceived value of EGB. 480 students from five universities in Taiwan participated in the study. Table 3 indicates the demographic details and the passing rates of EGB of the participants. The result indicates that with the implementation of the EGB, students' English scores on a standardized test increased.

Table 3. *Demographic data and EGB passing rates of the participants*

		Numbers	%	passing rates of EGB
Gender	Female	388	80.8	
	Male	92	19.2	
Grade	Freshmen	53	11.0	9.43
	Sophomores	131	27.3	9.9
	Juniors	185	38.5	30.2
	Seniors	111	23.1	73.9

$N=480$

Does the increase in the passing rate EBG increasing from freshmen to seniors mean that students' proficiency is actually improved? What was their attitude towards the policy? Table 4 indicates that students for some reason held positive attitudes toward the EGB policy in a six-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). A significant relationship exists between students' attitudes toward the EGB, and washback impact on students.

Table 4. *Summary of students' attitude toward EGB*

Items	Mean	SD	Significance
Attitude toward EGB policy	4.32	0.72	.00*
Attitude toward make-up measure	4.30	0.71	.12
Washback on students	3.57	1.16	.02*
Perceived value of EGB	2.86	1.01	.69

$N=480$ ,  $*p<.05$ .

Although students' attitudes toward EGB policy and the remedial courses were considerably positive, the results actually give rise to some negative indications. Students did not perceive the EGB being valuable and they felt some washback effects. The contradictory findings here actually coincide with many research arguments.

In a research study conducted by Su (2009), the results indicated that most of the participating university students held positive attitudes toward EGB, and regarded it as a reasonable requirement. Su (2005) indicated that most of the students in the universities of technology showed positive attitudes toward the benchmark policy, and believed that there should be aligned curriculum design along with the implementation of the benchmark policy. Huang et al. (2006) even concluded that 57% of the students from universities of technology, 64% of students from academic universities, and 76% of teachers from universities of technology, and 71% of teachers from academic universities show positive attitudes towards and support the EGB implementation. However, a negative attitude toward the implementation of the policy was found in a more recent study (Liauh, 2010) on students from universities of

technology.

*Investigation II. Interview on teachers' attitude toward EGB.*

In this investigation, English teachers' attitude toward the current implementation of EGB are examined. Table 5 shows teachers' background information. Eight English teachers participated in the study.

Table 5. *Teachers' demographic information.*

		Number	%
Gender	Female	5	62.5
	Male	3	37.5
Teaching position	Full time	8	100
Highest degree	Ph.D.	6	75
	Master	2	25
Years of teaching English at college level	6-10 yrs	4	50
	11-15	4	50

The interview questions used in this investigation were adapted from the ones developed by Chu (2009), which are related to teachers' attitude toward EGB, including two subscales: teachers' perceived impact of EGB and their perceptions of the stakes and status of EGB. Teachers' perceived impact of EGB includes teachers' worries about students' performance, teachers' indifference to EGB and teachers' adaptive teaching to EGB. Table 6 summarizes the findings from the interview.

Table 6. *Summary of results on teachers' attitudes toward EGB.*

#### Opinions

Teachers' perceived impact of EGB

Worries about students' performance      Most teachers worried about this.

Indifference to EGB	Most teachers did not pay much attention to it.
Adaptive teaching to EGB	Only one teacher made changes to her teaching.
Teachers' perceptions of the stakes and status of EGB	
Perceived stakes of EGB	Teachers regarded the stakes of EGB high.
Perceived status of EGB	Teachers considered the status of EGB important.

In regards to teachers' worries about students' performance, the majority of them showed a moderate to high level of worry and concern regarding students' performance on the exit exam, the EGB exam. All the teachers regarded that the students' performance on EGB would affect their holding of teaching position and they considered the status of EGB important as to the finding of future career for the students. However, in spite of the fact that many teachers showed concerns about their students' chances of passing the exam, most of them responded that they did not pay much attention to the EGB while constructing their syllabi. As important as the exam may be for the students, it did not affect what and how the teachers teach, nor did it cause teachers to adapt their teaching to the English exam except for one.

Based on the findings above, the majority of the teachers recognized the importance of the benchmark policy but failed to think the exam itself has an impact on what and how they teach, nor did they make adaptations to their teaching methods in order to try to help students to pass the exit exams. Most teachers perceived the exit exam as important, but they did not necessarily think they should incorporate the testing content into their teaching practice. Once again, this contradictory finding has approved the argument of this research. Yet, setting forth a benchmark policy seems to have become an inevitable trend in universities in Taiwan.

Hence, from the findings revealed above, three pedagogical implications are offered to persuade policy-makers to rethink the implementation of the policy.

#### *Pedagogical Implication 1: Remedial Courses on the Aligned Curriculum*

The main purpose of establishing an English graduation benchmark is to promote students'



language proficiency, not to keep them from graduating. Along with the implementation of the benchmark policy, the aligned curriculum design is provided by most universities. When students cannot achieve a satisfactory score for graduation, they are required to take some remedial English courses to make up for their deficiency. Only if they pass those courses can they graduate from university. Hence the graduation requirement is also called the “exit English examination”.

These remedial courses are provided under certain circumstances by different universities. Some require students to take the standardised test before they can take the course, while some are more relaxed about this restriction. At some universities, some English courses can be waived with a satisfactory score on a recognized test.

Nunan’s (2003) survey of the impact of the English language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region revealed “significant problems regarding a disjunction between curriculum rhetoric and pedagogical reality” (p.589). The teaching in those remedial courses is mostly test-oriented. The main idea of having the courses is to help students pass the requirement. Therefore, the impact of the implementation has been an impetus to students’ learning. In a survey conducted by Su (2005), more than half of the college students agreed with the policy of setting a graduation benchmark, because they thought it could enhance their competitiveness as long as the targets are attainable. Similar results were also found in studies by Duo et al. (2012), Yen and Hsin (2006), and Chu (2009). However, while some view it positively, other students regard the graduation benchmark as redundant to their learning. Liauh (2010), for example, surveyed 311 students from 7 universities of technology and found that many had a negative attitude toward the implementation of the exit English examination as well as the English curriculum alignment, teaching materials and teaching methods.

Nevertheless, the pass rates for GEPT and other equivalent standardized tests have substantially increased due to the benchmark policy set by universities. Taking Ming-Chuan University as an example, after establishing the graduation benchmark in 2005, the students’ pass rate for the GEPT progressively improved. Similar results were found at other universities. Pedagogically, while designing the test questions, there should be a connection between what is taught and what is tested to ensure positive washback (Saif, 2006).

### *Pedagogical Implication 2: Standardized Assessments and Washback Effects*

Under the requirement of the English graduation benchmark, students are required to pass certain standardized proficiency tests. A few universities have developed their own proficiency tests in order to assess their students easily and more cost-effectively, while many of them prefer standardized tests such as GEPT, TOEIC, IELTS or an equivalent to assess students' English proficiency. Enchanted by the power of standardized testing, policymakers or educators from time to time come out strongly in favor of adopting tests as a means to improve teaching and learning (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Spolsky 1994). Using tests to measure what has been learned in the classroom is commonly believed to be effective. However, the relationship between learning and testing remains questioned and challenged.

By definition, testing or assessment refers to procedures or activities that are designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitudes or skills of students (Kellaghan and Greaney, 2001). When most universities prefer to adopt external standardized tests, it is inevitable that students will feel pressured and anxious that the tests will not reflect or value what has been learned in the classroom (Tierney, 1998; Su 2009). Tsai and Tsou (2009) criticized the policy of using standardized language tests for students in the face of the graduation requirement, as they are considered "insufficient to reflect what is learnt and taught in the language classroom" (Gipps, 2002) and "likely to make English instruction become test-driven" (p.319). Without considering differences in learning situations and overall curriculum planning, learning is no longer fun but full of pressure as students are required to achieve a certain test score and the teaching of English becomes test-oriented. This is known as "washback effect". "Washback", referring to the effect of testing on teaching and learning (Hughes, 1989; Bailey, 1996), is a neutral term, which has the potential to become either positive or negative (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Lin, 2010). Tests will influence the design of the curriculum (Spolsky, 1994) and have impacts on teaching methods and students' learning strategies (Biggs, 1995). Cheng (2005) defined washback as an intended or accidental direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning through a change of public examinations.

Two aspects of washback effects of the English graduation benchmark have been investigated in some research. Chu (2009) indicated that washback on teaching was limited only to teaching of test-taking strategies in order to help students pass the requirement. The washback on learning was not positive because most of the participants found that the benchmark requirement was too high to achieve, while it was not helpful to the high achievers (Chu, 2009).

Only when students' language needs are taken into consideration, is it likely that positive washback can be generated (Chu, 2009). Some educators indicated that various professions require different language abilities, and not all graduates from universities need to possess the same level of English proficiency (Lin, 2009).

Two streams of universities are shaped to accommodate students with different needs and expectations for their future careers. Students who study at technical universities focus more on their training in professional skills and the knowledge of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) while those who study at general universities tend to have higher competency and confidence in English performance (Huang, 1997). The TOEIC scores for these two streams of universities are around 150 points apart.

Most of the students at technical universities in Taiwan neither have confidence in their English competence nor motivation to learn English. Table 2 actually explains the phenomenon mentioned above. While the average scores in recent years for general university students have not been progressing much, the ones at technical institutes have fallen even further behind since the establishment of the graduation benchmark. The figures above actually reflect the unintended effects of the MOE, which are often neglected in implementation of the policy. The intention of the MOE was to promote students' language proficiency, not knowing that it has caused problems for so many students. The idea behind the setting of the benchmark was to help monitor students' learning outcomes. However, how far standardized tests designed by external examiners can reflect what was learnt and taught at different types of universities is often considered a problem (La Celle-Peterson and Rivera, 1994). A research finding by Su in 2009 has described the situation that we are facing right now.

There are no significant differences between public and private institutions in relation to whether the graduation threshold is implemented or not; nevertheless the private schools are more significantly engaged in the regulation than the public ones (Su, 2009, p.38).

Chu (2009) even concluded in her research that the English graduation benchmark should not be fixed for all students who are in different majors, as it appears to be high for low-achieving students but low for high-achieving ones.

*Pedagogical Implication 3: students' needs analysis and attitude toward the policy*

Some policy-makers and educators, believing in the Pygmalion Effect, may decide to set a higher benchmark, while others follow the policy based on their understanding of the recruited students' English proficiency levels. Lin stated (2011) that it is important for the universities to make the regulation for the graduation benchmark clear before students enter university. According to a study by Tsai and Tsou (2009), students did not recognize the necessity of adopting standardized ELP tests as a tool of assessment determining their graduation requirement, nor did they support the benchmark policy. Su (2005) insists that the graduation requirement should be based on the analysis of students' needs, which shape the alignment of the curriculum (Duan, 2001). Saif (1999) states that positive washback effects are likely to be generated if students' language needs are taken into consideration.

Different professions require different language abilities, and not all graduates need to possess the same English proficiency levels (Huang et al., 2006). It is more reasonable that different departments set up requirements according to students' educational goals and needs (Lin, 2009). Since the implementation of the graduation proficiency benchmark, research on students' attitudes toward this policy has found them to be positive and supportive (Duo et al., 2012; Tsai and Tsou, 2009). In Liah's study (2010), it is found that the graduation benchmark seems to have influenced students with lower achievement more than those with higher English proficiency. Similar results were found in the research by Du et al. (2012): students of English majors with better English proficiency tended to accept and recognize the policy better.

It has been over a decade since the first establishment of the English proficiency graduation benchmark. Although positive results have shown that the majority was in favour of the establishment of the policy, the average performance of current students at universities and institutes of technology, is behind what was expected by the MOE (LTTC, 2008; MOE, 2008).

## Conclusion

As many studies have shown, the setting of the English graduation benchmark has had positive impacts upon the learning of students once their attitude is set right. However, many educators have also pointed out that positive washback can only be generated if students' needs are taken into consideration for the ultimate goals of their language educations. Besides, as demonstrated in various research projects, attitudes toward the EGB policy have been found to be inconsistent between students in different streams of universities. Setting an English proficiency graduation benchmark is not the key to improving students' overall English competence; rather, reforming the English curriculum at the university level, to increase students' interest and motivation, is the fundamental solution to this problem. The research has established some bases for the implementation of such reforms. Recommendations on further research should focus on whether the curriculum alignment meets the students' needs and whether washback effects overwhelm the learning performance.

While more and more universities in Taiwan implement the benchmark for student graduation, the current study proposes that the policy should be re-examined and re-considered to reduce negative impacts on students and teachers, and on the educational system. This is particularly the case for students in technological universities or lower-level schools. It is hoped that the "fever" for studying English will not become a burning, painful experience.

**References:**

- Alderson, C. and Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics* 14, 115-129.
- Bailey, K. M. (1996). Working for washback: a review of the washback concept in language testing. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 257-279.
- Biggs, J. B. (1995). Assumptions underlying new approaches to assessment, *Curriculum Forum*, 4(2), 1-22.
- Chang, W. C. (2007). (in Chinese) 提升台灣大學英語文能力的政策與策略。教育資料與研究專刊, 12, 157-174.
- Cheng, L. (2005). *Changing language teaching through language testing: A washback study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chu, H. Y. (2009). *Stakes, needs and washback: An investigation of the English benchmark policy for graduation and EFL education at two technological universities in Taiwan*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. NTNU, Taipei.
- Duo, P.C. (2012). *English proficiency graduation benchmark: challenges and concerns*. Paper presented at 2012 Chung Yuan Christian University Conference of Applied Linguistics.
- Gipps, C. (2002). Socio-cultural perspectives on assessment. In *Learning for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English next: Why global English may mean the end of "English as a foreign language"*. London: The British Council.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (1997). Washback, impact and validity: ethical concerns. *Language Testing*, 14(3), 295- 303.
- Hsu, H. F. (2009). *The impact of implementing English proficiency tests as a graduation requirement at Taiwanese universities of technology*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of York, Dept. of Educational Studies
- Huang, J. C. et al. (2006). (in Chinese, 黃金城, 陳超明, 尤雪瑛, and 楊育芬) 大學英語能力及英文畢業門檻。第二十三屆中華民國英語文教學研究國際研討會論文集, 523-535, 文藻外語學院。高雄：觀塘國際圖書。
- Huang, S. Y. (1997). *Working towards a comprehensive Freshman English curriculum (Part II): A description of the Freshman English programs for non-English majors in Taiwan and a study*

- of the differences between expectations and reality (NSC 85-2418-H-029-003). NSC Project Report.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kellaghan, T. and Greaney, V. (2001). *Using assessment to improve the quality of education*. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Krashen, S. (2006, April 20). Letter: English villages and hype. *Taipei Times*. Retrieved July 2006, from <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2006/04/20>
- La celle-Peterson, M., and Rivera, C. 1994. Is it real for all kids? A framework for equitable assessment policies for English language learners. *Harvard Educational Review*. 64 (1), 55- 75
- Liauh, Y. H. (2010). A preliminary study of students' attitudes toward the exit English examination in technological and vocational higher education in Taiwan. *Journal of National Huwei University of Science & Technology*, 29(3), 41- 60.
- Lin, C. C. (2011). (In Chinese, 林志成). 學者:達《大學法》應廢門檻。中時電子報。 Retrieved November 23, 2011, from <http://www.pttonline.cc/view/60799>
- Lin, C. I. (2009). *A study of the implementation of English education policy at universities of technology in Taiwan*. Doctoral thesis, Graduate Institute of Educational Administration, National Pingtung University of Education, Taiwan.
- Lin, Y. T. (2010). *A study on the washback effect of the basic competence English test on junior high school students in northern Taiwan*. Master dissertation. National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan.
- Liu, L. (2002). Studying English: A national obsession. *Taipei Journal Online*. Retrieved December 21, 2002, from <http://publish.gio.gov.tw/FCJ/current/02122071.html>
- Language Teaching and Learning Centre (L TTC). (2008). *General English Proficiency Test (GEPT)*. Retrieved September 12, 2009, from <http://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw>
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2002). *Challenge 2008: National developmental plan*. Taiwan: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2008). *Education in Taiwan 2008*. Retrieved July 19, 2009, from <http://english.moe.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=9895&ctNode=814&mp=1>
- Nunan, D. (2003). The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 589- 613.
- Petrie, H.G. (1987). Introduction to evaluation and testing. *Educational Policy*, 1,175-180.

- Saif, S. (1999). *Theoretical and empirical considerations in investigating washback: A study of ESL / EFL learners*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Victoria, Canada.
- Saif, S. (2006). Aiming for Positive Washback: A case study of international teaching assistants. *Language Testing*, 23(1), 1-34.
- Spolsky, B. (1994). The examination of classroom backwash cycle: Some historical cases. In Nunan, D., Berry, V. and Berry, R. (Eds) *Bringing about change in language education* (pp.55-66), Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, Dept. of Curriculum Studies.
- Su, S.W. (2005). A study on the needs for the related regulations of Exit English Exam in Taiwan. *Educational Review of the Kaohsiung Normal University in Taiwan*, 24, 47-66
- Su, S.W. (2009). A study of graduation threshold of English competency from the perspective of EFL teachers of technological institutions in southern Taiwan. *Kaohsiung Normal University Journal*, 27, 37- 60
- Tierney, R.J. (1998). Literacy assessment reform: Shifting beliefs, principled possibilities, and emerging practices. *The Reading Teacher*, 51(5), 374-390.
- Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). (2010). Retrieved January 11, 2011, from [http://www.toeic.com.tw/toeic\\_news\\_page.jsp?type=4](http://www.toeic.com.tw/toeic_news_page.jsp?type=4)
- Tsai, Y. and Tsou, C. H. (2009). A standardized English language proficiency test as the graduation benchmark: student perspectives on its application in higher education. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 16(3), 319- 330.
- Yen, S. C. and Hsin, C. A. (2006). *Taiwanese undergraduate students' attitude toward graduation English language proficiency benchmark: A pilot study*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Kaohsiung Taiwan, R.O.C. Air Force Academy, the Department of Foreign Languages.