

投稿類別：英文寫作類

篇名：

Vocational School Students' Responses to the ETTVEJCEE Writing Test in 2015

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## **I. Introduction**

### **I.1. Motivation of This Paper**

For decades, the multiple-choice test format has dominated the General English Test of Technological and Vocational Education Joint College Entrance Examinations (hereafter ETTVEJCEE). It was not until the year of 2014 that the English writing section was officially announced to incorporate in ETTVEJCEE in the following year (i.e. 2015). It was estimated that the English writing test section in ETTVEJCEE roughly accounted for 24 scores at most, extending the overall test time to one hour and forty minutes (Liu Chia-yun, 2014). Pedagogically, the English writing test in ETTVEJCEE purported to bolster students' general English writing proficiency in the division of the following 5 sections: (1) gap-filling Chinese-English translation, (2) short question and answer, (3) direct renderings (Chinese-English or English-Chinese translation), (4) reformulation of provided sentences (i.e. the sentential combination), and (5) the rearrangement of provided sentences. Particularly, the gap-filling Chinese-English translation and reformulation of provided sentences (i.e. the sentential combination) had been realized in the ETTVEJCEE in the year of 2015. These two writing sections were reportedly widely acceptable by test takers thanks to the highly comprehensible lexicons and sentence patterns for measurement. Nevertheless, non-English majors in the vocational education programs were reportedly less proficient in their general English abilities, let alone their simple English writing performances. What's worse, the scant attention to the English writing practice in class was surmised to aggravate vocational school students' writing test performances. Surely, non-English majors in the vocational education programs would be highly apprehensive of the forward washback effects that ETTVEJCEE English writing test brought about. Additionally, there raised a serious discrepancy between the number of English writing test items and the provided answer sheet (i.e. the exceeding numbers of blanks in the answer sheet). Test takers would be readily mis-guided to supply their writing answers in the wrong blanks. Nevertheless, the ETTVEJCEE English writing test was assumed to manifest its driving forces in the general English course instruction as well as students' strategic pathways in their EFL study. This merits our major concern in our current research study. Through our written research investigation, both English teachers and students would be acutely aware of the future directions in the EFL writing instruction and practice.

### **I.2. Purpose of This Paper**

Based on the aforementioned research motivation, three purposes in our research paper were outlined as follows:

- (1) To detect vocational school to-be graduates' attitudes toward the ETTVEJCEE

English writing test in the year of 2015

- (2) To perceive the extent of washback effects of the ETTVEJCEE English writing test on the improvement of English writing performances by vocational school to-be graduates
- (3) To survey vocational school to-be graduates' attitudes toward other ETTVEJCEE English writing test sections which had been officially announced by Testing Center for Technological and Vocational Education (hereafter TCTVE) but yet unrealized in the ETTVEJCEE English writing test in the year of 2015.

### **I.3. Limitation of This Paper**

The main limitation of this paper lay in the questionnaire respondents *per se*. As having been stated in the previous section, only to-be-graduates in vocational schools were invited as the written questionnaire respondents for our research study. Yet, we narrowed down our research scope to six vocational schools in Great Tainan City (three state-run and three private vocational schools). The limited resources of written respondents possibly biased our research paper. To put it alternatively, our research results would not be widely applied to other administrative districts.

Apart from the invited research respondents, our research paper zoomed in onto to-be vocational school graduates' feedbacks toward the officially announced ETTVEJCEE writing test formats. Other types of English writing tests (e.g. direct English writing composition) lay beyond our research scope. Through invited test takers' written responses by means of descriptive statistical analysis (i.e. percentage values in the forms of various charts and graphs), we would clearly understand the extent of difficulty levels in the officially claimed types of English writing test formats.

## **II. Methods**

This section primarily accounted for the sampled vocational school students, self-designed written questionnaire, instruments utilized in this research paper, and the overall procedures of our research investigation. These issues were sketched in discrete subsections as follows.

### **II.1 The Invited Questionnaire Respondents**

This research paper established itself as the comparative study, exclusively selecting vocational school to-be graduates (both English- and non-English majors) in Great Tainan City as the written respondents to delve into their reactions to the newly-implemented English writing test formats in the ETTVEJCEE in the year of 2015. Totally, 200 copies of self-designed written questionnaires were distributed to six vocational schools in Great Tainan City (three state-run and three private vocational schools), and 171 valid written responses were successfully secured. The effective response rate reached 85.50%.

## II.2 The Self-designed Written Questionnaire

Based on the aforementioned research motivation and the formulated research questions, the self-designed written questionnaire was concisely presented in terms of three research objectives which were sketched above.

## II.3 Instruments Utilized in This Research Paper

Here, only the descriptive statistical analysis (i.e. the percentage scores) were utilized for the computation of our written responses. The statistical results were further transformed in various forms of charts (e.g. the bar chart, the pie chart) for the concise presentation. In our research paper, the Excel 2010 was exclusively adopted for our numerical analysis as well as the chart/graph drawing.

## III. Findings/Discussion

### III.1 The Background Data of Surveyed Written Respondents

#### III.1.1 Gender

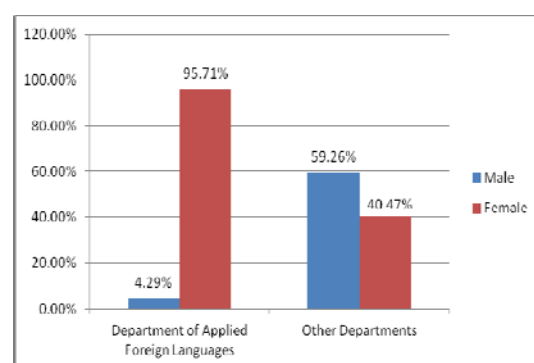


Figure 1

As Figure 1 presented, we obtained the exceeding number of female English majors for their written responses, reaching 95.15% in the total number. By contrast, nearly 60 percent of male non-English majors consented to supply their written comments, presenting the 18.79 percent of gap with the female counterparts (40.47%).

#### III.1.2 Fields of Sampled Respondents' Current Academic Study

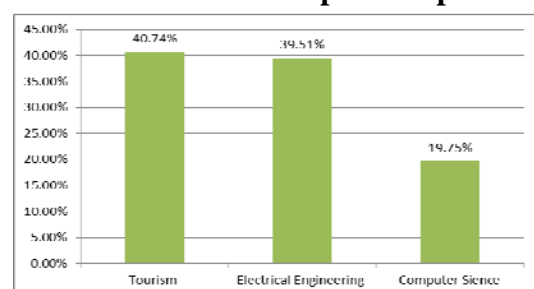


Figure 2

In Figure 2, both tourism and electrical engineering participants occupied the heavyweights among the non-English population, reaching 40.74% and 39.51% respectively. Only 19.75% computer science consented to supply written responses.

## III.2 Vocational school Students' Reaction to the ETTVEJCEE Writing Test

### III.2.1 High School Students' Responses to ETTVEJCEE Writing Test

In view of Figure 3, most of the invited non-English majors (90.13%) casted their negative attitudes toward the newly-implemented English writing tests in ETTVEJCEE. To our surprise, nearly 66% English majors expressed their issue similar attitudes toward this despite they comparatively allotted a great deal of time in

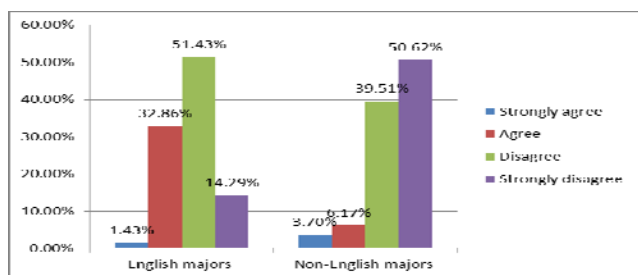


Figure 3

non-English majors (50.62%) extremely disagreed with the newly-implemented English writing tests in ETTVEJCEE.

### III. 2.2 The Follow-up Investigation on Students' Negative Attitudes toward English Writing Tests in ETTVEJCEE

#### III. 2.2.1 Reasons Why Students Disagree with English Writing Tests

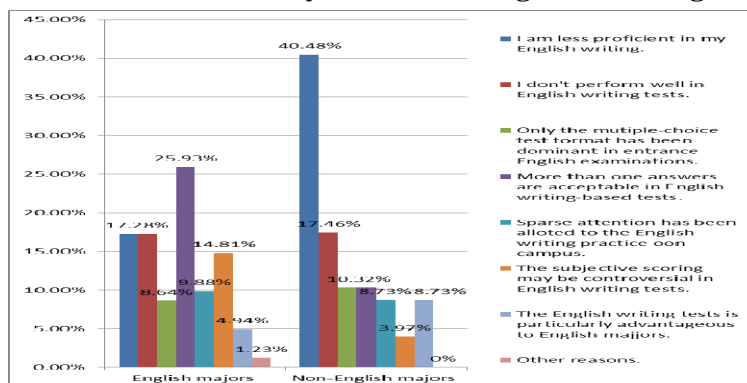


Figure 4

Figure 3, English majors: 65.71%;non-English majors: 90.13%). For non-English majors, the main reason lied in their less proficient English writing (40.48%). The fear of English writing-oriented test items was surveyed as the second attributing factor (See Figure 4, 17.46%). Additionally, 10.32% non-English majors had long been conditioned by the multiple-choice test format in the entrance English examinations (e.g. the Junior High School Basic Competency English Test), feeling weird in the ETTVEJCEE English writing test. Regarding English majors with the negative attitudes toward the ETTVEJCEE English writing test, the major reason was attributed to more than one possible answers in the writing-based tests (25.93%), which were not necessarily accepted by evaluators. By extension, the subjective scoring might produce (40.74%). Other than these two variables, 17.28% English majors admitted that they were less proficient in their overall English language abilities. The ETTVEJCEE English writing test aggravated their English test performances.

#### III.2.2.2 Students' Willingness to Practice ETTVEJCEE Writing Mock Tests

Figure 5 purported to verify the validity of the results in Figure 3. As Figure 4 revealed, the subjective scoring was surveyed as the major attributing factor for

their English writing practice on campus. Yet, in our in-depth observation, half of the English majors (51.43%) virtually presented the moderately negative attitudes toward this issue. By contrast, half of the

The results of Figure 4 in the following further explored the reasons why our sampled students opposed to the English writing tests in ETTVEJCEE in the year of 2015 (See

English majors. Nevertheless, 76.09% English majors with negative attitudes toward ETTVEJCEE writing tests were still willing to practice the mock writing tests.

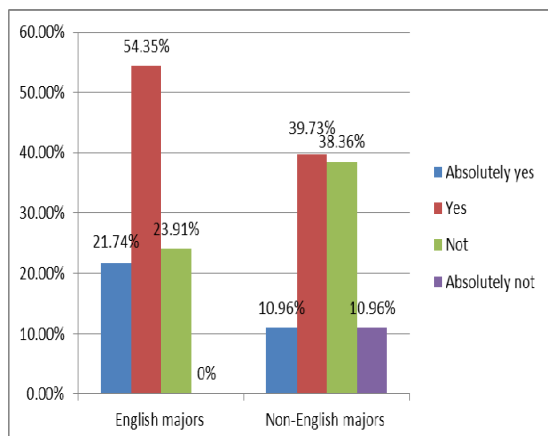


Figure 5

### III.2.2.3 The Willingness to Improve English Writing at Cram School

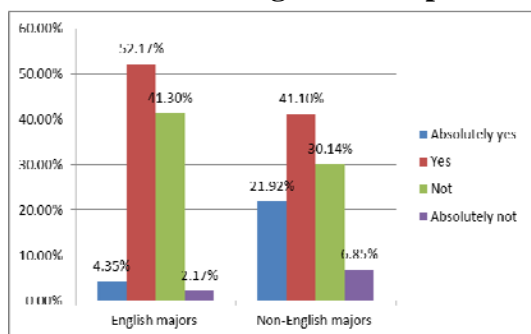


Figure 6

To put it alternatively, 23.91% sampled English majors held the strongly negative attitudes. Comparatively, despite 90.13% non-English majors were strongly opposed to the ETTVEJCEE writing tests (See Figure 3, 90.13%), half of these test population were still willing to practice the mock writing tests. In other words, 49.32% non-English majors extremely argued against the ETTVEJCEE writing tests.

Figure 6 primarily verified the conclusion of Figure 5. Here, the *willingness to improve test-based English writing proficiency at cram schools* was treated as the luring factor to detect students' real attitudes toward the ETTVEJCEE writing tests. As

Figure 6 presented, 56.52% English majors were intended to further their test-based English writing proficiency through the intensive training courses at cram schools, comparatively reducing 19.57% in their positive responses in Figure 5 (i.e. the willingness to practice the test-based English writing mock tests). Distinctively, 63.02% non-English majors were highly desired for the short-term intensive English writing program at cram schools, rising 13.70% in their positive attitudes toward Figure 5. In short, non-English majors would heavily rely on the cram school English writing program to bolster their test performances.

## III. 3 The washback effects of ETTVEJCEE English writing test

### III. 3.1 Reasons Why Students Support the ETTVEJCEE Writing Test

What followed, we shifted our lens on into the surveyed population in favor of ETTVEJCEE writing test (See Figure 3, English majors: 34.29%; non-English majors: 9.87%). For English majors, the highly-proficient English writing was instrumental to their job employment (34.78%). That was, the career-oriented factor merited the primary consideration. This ran counter to non-English majors' written responses, in which four English language skills were of tantamount importance (38.46%). In

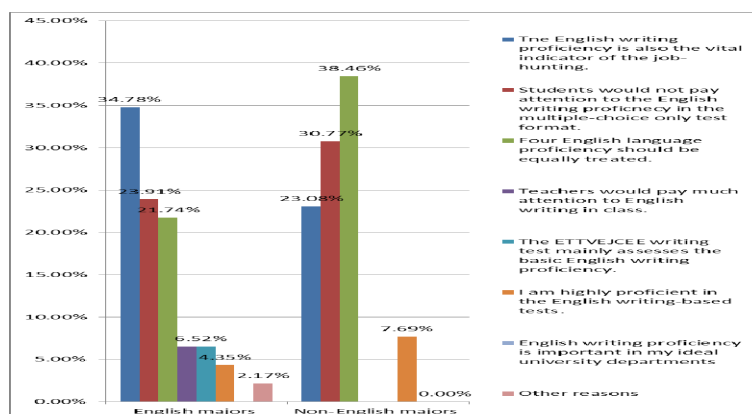


Figure 7

indeed treated as the vital variable (i.e. the gradually changing focus on the English writing practice in class) (English majors: 23.91%; non-English majors: 30.77%). Interestingly, for these two test population in Figure 7, the English writing improvement was less relevant to the admission requirement of their ideal university departments (English majors: 6.52%; non-English majors: 0%).

### III. 3.2 The Identity to the Washback Effects of ETTVEJCEE Writing Test

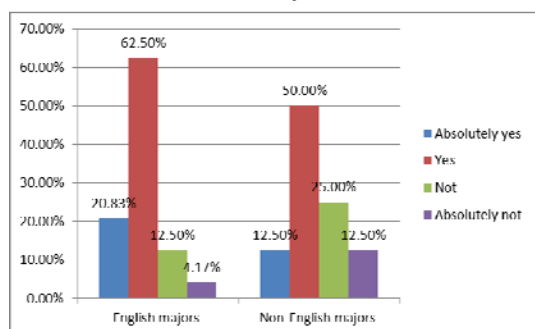


Figure 8

instruction, including students' improvement in their limited English writing proficiency (English majors: 83.33%; non-English majors: 62.50%). In short, students in favor of the ETTVE JCEE writing test were indeed highly confident in its pedagogically washback effects.

### III. 3.3 The Discrepancy between ETTVEJCEE Writing Test Items And Corresponding Blanks in the Answer Sheet

In comparison with the high level of confidence in the washback effects of ETTVEJCEE writing test (See Figure 8), the technical problem (i.e. the discrepancy between ETTVEJCEE writing test items and their corresponding blanks in the answer sheet in the year of 2015) was surveyed to demolish students' support of the ETTVEJCEE writing test, reaching 60% or so in their written responses (English majors: 58.34%; non-English majors: 62.50%). Truly, as Figure 7 and Figure 8

other words, the intrinsic motivation acted as the major driving force for non-English majors. Nevertheless, these two surveyed groups admitted that washback effects of ETTVEJCEE writing tests were

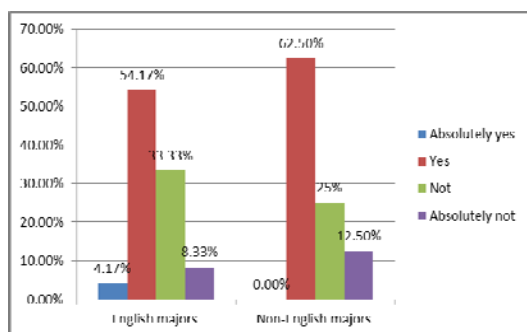


Figure 9

evidently revealed, the washback effects of ETTVEJCEE writing test acted as the catalyst for the normal classroom instruction of high school English writing. The technical problem in the year of 2015 would drastically lose high school students' support of this newly-implemented test policy.

### III. 3.4 The Impacts of the Subjective English Writing Scoring

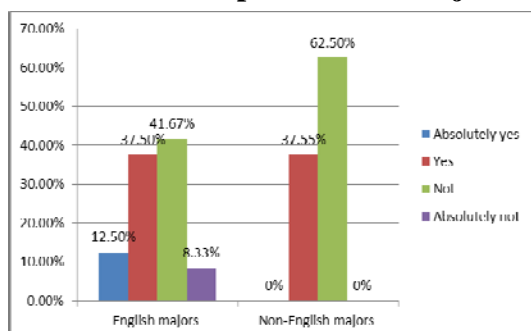


Figure 10

Apart from the technical problem in Figure 9, the subjective scoring was evidently surveyed as the contributing factor for students' disapproval of the ETTVEJCEE writing test (See Figure 4). This research finding remained true for the test population in favor of the ETTVEJCEE writing test. As Figure

10 revealed, half of the respondents, especially English majors, still presented their negative responses to the ETTVEJCEE writing test (English majors: 50.00%; non-English majors: 37.75%).

### III. 4 Students' Responses to ETTVEJCEE Writing Test Formats

#### III.4.1 Students' Feedbacks on ETTVEJCEE Writing Test Formats in 2015

##### III. 4.1.1 The Gap-filling Chinese-English Translation Test

At the outset, we replicated the ETTVEJCEE gap-filling Chinese-English translation test. Then, we further delved into invited students' written feedbacks.

藉由旅遊，我們可獲得寶貴的第一手經驗。

Through \_\_\_\_\_, we can gain \_\_\_\_\_ firsthand experience.

標準答案：第一格 traveling, 第二格 precious

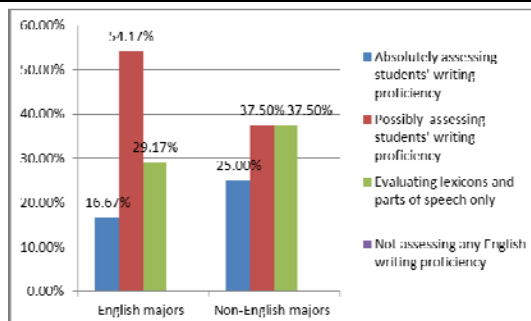


Figure 11

As Figure 11 demonstrated, at least 60 percent of sampled respondents believed that the gap-filling Chinese-English translation test was supposedly advantageous to the improvement in their limited renderings (English majors: 70.84%; non-English majors: 62.50%).

This implied that language components were surveyed as the building block to their English renderings. To put it alternatively, students lay the overt emphasis on the accuracy of language components



rather than on the fluency of their written communication. Yet, in this study, the non-English majors were seemingly negative to this test format owing to its limited assessment of students' lexicons and parts of speech only (English majors: 29.17%; non-English majors: 37.50%).

### III. 4.1.2 The Rearrangement of Sentences

Similar to the previous research sub-section, we replicated the ETTVEJCEE sentential rearrangement test in the following for our further discussion:

Recent/improves/regular exercise/memory and thinking skills/suggest  
that/studies

標準答案：Recent studies suggest that regular exercise improves memory and thinking skills.

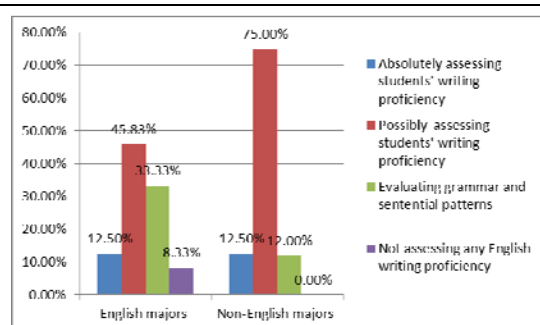


Figure 12

In comparison with the full support of the gap-filling Chinese-English translation test (See Figure 11), there presented the varying feedbacks on the sentential rearrangement test. Despite this writing test format still grasped the positive feedback of English majors (58.33%), such a popularity rate indeed

dropped 12.51% in comparison with the previous ETTVEJCEE writing test format (See Figure 11, 70.84%). Indeed, 33.33% English majors reflected that such a writing test format failed to mirror students' real English writing proficiency, and 8.33% English majors strongly argued against the sentential rearrangement test. Distinctively, this grammar-based writing test format was more likely to win the positive feedback of non-English majors in view of its soaring popularity rates from 62.50% (See Figure 11) to 87.50% (See Figure 12). This implied that non-English majors were intended to restore their confidence in their limited English writing proficiency from the grammar-oriented sentential rearrangement test.

### III.4.2 The Feedbacks on ETTVEJCEE Writing Test Formats in the Future

#### III. 4.2.1 Short English Question-Response Writing Test

In this subsection, we conducted an further investigation on high school students' responses to the ETTVEJCEE writing test formats which had been officially announced but yet unimplemented in the ETTVEJCEE in the year of 2015. We set out with the short question-and-response in the following:

簡答：請依據問題回答。Adam: Why didn't you finish your homework?

Paul: \_\_\_\_\_

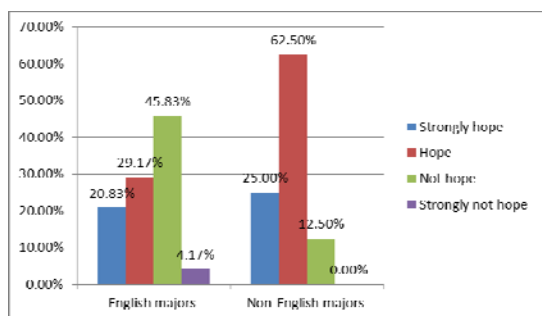


Figure 13

sentential rearrangement test in Figure 12. Yet, such a writing test still failed to grasp the support of more English majors. This might be inferred that the short question-response test acted as the backdrop of assessing students' oral proficiency rather than writing proficiency. Nonetheless, this limited English writing test format was surmised to gain non-English majors' confidence in their limited English writing improvement in lieu of their written responses (87.50%).

### III. 4.2.2 Sentential Combination

Finally, we casted our attention to the last type of ETTVEJCEE writing test *Sentential Combination* which had not been realized in the ETTVEJCEE in the year of 2015. The example of this writing test and students' written feedbacks were respectively presented in the following:

句子合併：(1) I do not like seafood. (2) I do not like pizza. 請以 neither...nor... 合併這兩句。

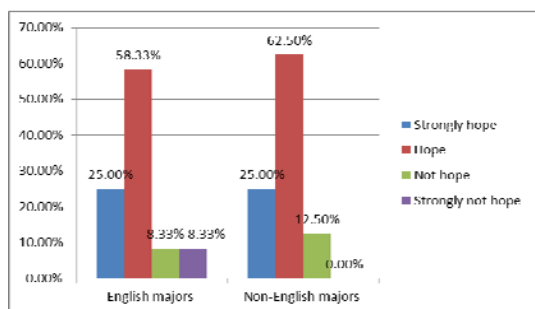


Figure 14

sentential combination writing test had been frequently measured in students' junior high school English monthly tests, mock tests, and GEPT tests. That was the major reason why both test groups highly expected such a writing test was brought back to the ETTVEJCEE.

### IV. Conclusion

Based on our research findings, we summarized the relevant results:

1. Insofar, the newly-implemented ETTVEJCEE writing test failed to win the wide popularity of sampled senior high school to-be graduates. Nearly 65% English majors and 91% non-English majors held their negative attitudes toward this test

In view of the surveyed result in Figure 13, the short question-response test surprisingly won the popularity of more non-English majors (English majors: 50.00%; non-English majors: 87.50%). Supposedly, this writing test would mirror real English writing proficiency in comparison with the

In comparison with the varying feedbacks on the question-response writing test in Figure 13, the sentential combination won the overwhelming popularity in these two surveyed groups (English majors: 83.33%; non-English majors: 87.50%). The major reason lay in the *practice effect*. That was, the

- policy. For non-English majors, their less proficient English writing skills were treated as the primary contributing factor (Figure 4). Contrarily, English majors were afraid of the subjective scoring (Figure 4).
2. Despite most of the surveyed senior high school students were negative to the ETTVEJCEE writing tests, they would take strategic pathways to improve the test-oriented English writing skills (Figure 5 and Figure 6). English majors would conduct the constant practice of the test-oriented English writing test items (Figure 5), while non-English majors would rely heavily on cram schools to engage in the intensive training of limited English writing skills (Figure 6).
  3. Although quite a few of our invited respondents were in favor of this newly-implemented ETTVEJCEE writing test (Figure 3), the driving forces varied with these two surveyed groups. The instrumental motivation stimulated English majors to further their English writing (Figure 7). Differently, non-English majors were intended to bolster their English writing through their intrinsic motivation (Figure 7). Most of them believed that the ETTVEJCEE writing test would gradually bring about the washback effects on their English writing practice in class (Figure 8). Yet, the technical problem of ETTVEJCEE in 2015 (the discrepancy between test items and their corresponding blanks in the answer sheet), in couple with the subjective scoring, would tarnish students' confidence in ETTVEJCEE writing tests (Figure 9 and Figure 10).
  4. Regarding the officially announced ETTVEJCEE writing tests, both surveyed groups were in high support of the sentential combination (Figure 14). Other types of English writing test formats won the varying degrees of preferences between these two test population. English majors were also in favor of the gap-filling Chinese-English translation test, but they would not prefer the question-response writing test (Figure 11 and Figure 13). This research finding was contrary to non-English majors' written responses, in which the question-response writing test was the preferred test measurement (Figure 11).

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