ABSTRACT

Nominal group as the lexico-grammatical unit has the most variety at the rank of groups and this allows the widest range of meanings to be expressed in both English and Chinese. When nominal groups are arranged in Theme positions, a lexical string indicating the cohesion and coherence of a text is created. Accordingly, the nominal group is a useful tool for expressing meaning in a written text and organizing the text. Holding a study of reading and writing in both English and Chinese measured by nominal groups has its significance for developing writing.

The main aim of this research is to identify what is really happening in reading and writing by means of describing nominal groups in reading texts in textbooks and Chinese EFL learners' writing. Both English and Chinese languages are involved. Reading passages were collected from textbooks for Grade Three and Sophomores, journals and guided writing were randomly selected from this same group of student.

In this study, 30 reading texts were randomly selected from 48 samples and 320 writing entries were randomly selected from 6560 samples by 40 students (20 students in Grade Three and 20 sophomores). Data were taken from two phases (beginning and final phases) of the semester and the analysis was a description of the role of the nominal group in the Lexical-grammatical System based on functional grammar (Halliday 1998). The categories of nominal groups, the complexity of nominal groups and nominal groups in Theme positions are the
emphases of discussing reading exposure and writing response.

The findings show that although in most cases there are not as many categories of nominal groups as in the reading texts used in students’ writing, some similarities in terms of the complexity of nominal groups were in evidence. In students writing, the limited lexical range of nominal groups, particularly nominal groups in Theme positions were observed. Accordingly, pedagogical implications are suggested to help students improve their reading and writing in their L1 and L2. It is hoped that this study will yield a more precise picture of Chinese EFL learners’ reading input and writing output and provide some references for second language acquisition through nominal groups in reading exposure and writing response.