

## *Original Paper*

# “Simplicity as a Weapon”: A Comparative Analysis of Zhang Xuefeng and State Education Talk in the New Media Sphere

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### **Abstract**

*In the new media era, public educational discourse has tended toward popularization, with Zhang Xuefeng’s educational discourse serving as a typical representative. From the perspective of corpus linguistics, this study constructs two corpora: the Zhang Xuefeng Educational Corpus (ZXC) and the Expert Educational Corpus (EEC) of university scholars. With AntConc, NeoSCA and SPSS adopted, a comparative analysis is conducted on lexical richness and syntactic complexity. The results indicate that there is no significant difference in sentence length between the two types of discourse, while extremely significant differences exist in lexical richness, subordinate structures, coordinate structures and phrasal structures. Overall, Zhang Xuefeng’s discourse tends to be simplified and popular, whereas expert discourse is more rigorous and standardized. This study reveals the differentiation law of popularization and specialization in new media educational discourse, interprets the adaptive value of simplified expression in mass communication, and provides empirical references for optimizing the dissemination of public educational information and balancing professionalism and accessibility.*

### **Keywords**

*educational discourse, lexical richness, syntactic complexity, corpus linguistics, new media communication*

### **1. Introduction**

In the context of the ongoing development of new media technologies, the communication platforms including short videos and social media have reorganized the environment of information dissemination among the population and altered the form of the communication, as well as the expressive reasoning, of the public discourse of education. Unlike the strict and scholarly language of conventional professional scholarly educational dialogue, the educational dialogue in the new media space over time has been moving towards the popularization in order to suit both the pace and the

audience behavior of popular culture. The further education and employment educational discourse is a direct concern with the realities of education and job planning that people fear most, so it has become a type of discourse that has an intense level of attention and great communicative power. The mode of linguistic representation is directly linked to communication scope and societal awareness, but it also plays an important role in how effective the dissemination of education information is to the masses (Zhang & Peng, 2019). It is in this communication environment that the views of Zhang Xuefeng on education quickly gained space in the sphere of educational public communication by means of different forms of educational discourse expression to act as an intermediary between the educational information of professional nature and the rest of the world. It also makes studies on this popularized educational discourse very practical imperative.

Zhang Xuefeng is one of the most influential figures in further education and employment education, a famous tutor in postgraduate entrance examination and further education planning, and a legendary internet celebrity in the education industry in the new media setting of China. His involvement with the further education examination and career planning guidance in China dates back long ago and he has been paying attention to the fundamental educational requirements of the Chinese youth, particularly in the areas of postgraduate entrance exams, national college entrance exam applications, and academic and career planning. With such an exceptionally personalized version of educational discourse, he has gained a very large audience at home and is considered to be an iconic symbol of popularized educational communication in the new media educational communication space in China. Not only does the educational information he spreads deeply influence the decisions of many Chinese students to study further and seek a job and reshape the logic of students in their choices regarding applying to colleges as well as their attitudes towards employment perspectives (Fan et al., 2025), but also leads to widespread discussion throughout China regarding the paradigm of language use and the effectiveness of the message in the context of publicly speaking. In contrast to the expressiveness of classic academic professional education discourse, the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng is marked by a directness, accessibility and proximity to the population at large. It overcomes the boundaries of professional educational information expressions and achieves effective mass communication. However, linguistic characteristics of this very influential educational discourse have not been scientifically empirically investigated.

The evolving field of corpus linguistics has been accompanied by more advanced quantitative analysis and research on discourse. Lexical richness and syntactic complexity oriented methods of discourse measurement have offered an objective and exact research methodology of studying the linguistic properties of different types of discourse and built a strong theoretical framework of empirical research of educational discourse in society (Lu, 2011; Lu & Xu, 2016) Today, there is a developed mechanism of the study of linguistic characteristics of discourse in the sphere of academia. A diverse range of quantitative measures and analytical instruments can free discourse studies of the constraints of a purely qualitative examination. Nevertheless, the studies conducted so far generally cover the

traditional areas of interest in second language acquisition and academic writing, which makes it clear that a large research gap exists in the quantitative analysis of the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng in the age of new media, and his typical educational speech has not undergone systematic analysis yet. Concurrently, because the research corpus of the current paper is Chinese educational discourse, the proposed research is intended to be published in international journals, functional equivalence translation strategy used in corpus processing is employed. In addition to maintaining the initial sense of colloquial Chinese educational discourse fully, the strategy normalizes the process of interconversion of bilingual corpora between Chinese and English languages, balances the popularity of discourse expression, the objectivity of scholarly research, and the preciseness of cross-cultural communication, and does not have adverse effects on econometric findings due to translated bias.

This paper is based on this ground, on a practical need presented by educational communication through new media: this paper uses methods of corpus linguistics, lexical richness and syntactic complexity are viewed as central analytical instruments in this study, quantitative analysis of educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng, and comparative analysis with professional academic educational discourse. The article investigates the language characteristics and logical structure of his discourse, fills in the gaps of the current studies, and offers some empirical examples of how to optimize the use of public educational discourse and enhance the efficiency of educational information communication that gives this work not just the value of the theoretical research but the practical meaning as well.

## 2. Literature Review

Evolution of corpus linguistics has made multidimensional quantitative analysis of lexical richness, syntactic complexity and emotional expression a standard approach to the study of educational discourse and has provided the methodological basis to investigate linguistic characteristics and mechanisms of communication of education opinion leaders in the context of the new media (Zhang & Peng, 2019). Existing studies are limited to second language acquisition, academic writing and traditional media discourse, whereas quantitative discourse research, which focuses on subsequent education and employment-related educational opinions, is still very sparse. Only few studies have introduced vocabulary, syntax and communication effects within a unified analytic model to empirically validate them which makes it challenging to deduce the inner linguistic process underlying the great communicability and persuasiveness of popularized educational discourse. Discourse Linguistic properties can be used as central measures of communication effectiveness and persuasiveness. Popularized discourse is also more likely to hit its mark in the community, but the quantitative evidence of its impact in the sphere of education and career planning is not well studied.

The study of vocabulary and syntactic complexity in terms of quantitative research forms the basis of discourse analysis. Measurement indices of linguistic complexity were comprehensively analyzed by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998). Lu Xiaofei (2016) built a multidimensional syntactic indicator system and

created the L2SCA automatic analytical instrument and moved the study to refinement. Biber et al. (2011) extended the analytical structure at the phrasal level and introduced a theory of stages in syntactic development claiming that complexity levels can differ greatly depending on contexts. Most of the domestic research focuses on the acquisition of a second language. Xu et al. (2013) disclosed the patterns of development of syntax in the argumentative writings of students. Wu and Lei (2018) validated using meta-analysis that syntactic length is a reliable measure to differentiate language proficiency. The studies provide methodological sources to the quantitative research of educational discourse though they hardly cover common educational situations in the new media.

The investigation of the language and communication of the public educational discourse has been mostly qualitative, with no quantitative research involved. Deng (2008) defined decentralized properties of we-media. Wu and Lin (2021) have stated that educational discourse is now compelled to take on a form of popularization by short video platforms. Zhang and Peng (2019) suggested the mixed emotional communication model of short video media, which confirms that the expression with emotions and fragmentation is more suitable to modern media communication. Concerning the Zhang Xuefeng phenomena, scholars like Xu (2024), Cao (2025) and others analyzed them both in regards to employment and ethics, pointing to the fact that his discourse is plain language and highly opinionated and it can quickly react to social anxiety; however, none of the mentioned studies has tested quantitatively lexical and syntactic features. Lei (2016) claimed that educational discourse style influences the acceptance level among the population whereas Chen and Song (2020) investigated the communication strategies of discourse in the public context without discussing micro-linguistic aspects of the discourse of opinion leaders.

There is a common agreement in the studies of the relationship between the discourse simplification and communication impact. It was reported by Lu (2011) that both syntactic simplicity and the use of high-frequency vocabulary have the potential to decrease the cognitive load. The finding by Xu Xiaoyan et al. is that communication discourse oriented at the public usually exhibits lower complexity and higher level of orality. According to researchers Zhang and Peng (2019), Xie and Rong (2019), emotional and popularized expressions have been shown to increase the posting of responses as well as interactivity. Nonetheless, the current scholarship does not incorporate lexical as well as syntactic approaches of detailed study, and therefore it is difficult to give a systematic description of the underlying mechanism of how educational discourse in popular forms is enabled to realize communication benefits due to simplification.

To sum up, earlier research has advanced the measurement of lexical and syntax, the qualitative evaluation of educational discourse, and the empirical study of the functions of discourse simplification, but some significant research gaps still exist. To begin with, much of the research on educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng can be described as a descriptive level because it does not include any corpus-based quantitative analysis. In the second place, only a few works include both aspects of the lexical richness and syntactic complexity in a single theoretical framework, thus it is not possible to

provide an objective representation of their linguistic features. The third point is that it is not compared with the traditional expert educational discourse, which is why it is hard to identify strategic discrepancies and underlying logic of communication.

Accordingly, this paper puts forward three research questions:

- (1) Which overall features can be seen within the lexical richness and syntactic complexity that is found in the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng?
- (2) Based on the matched professional academic educational discussion corpus, which are its major differences in terms of lexical and syntactic properties?
- (3) In what ways can its simplified lexical and syntactic properties be adjusted to the new media communication environment and in what directions do these adaptations point to the language use in educational communication targeting the public?

### 3. Research Design

Theoretical principles underlying corpus linguistics and discourse analysis form the basis of the current research, with the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng and the university experts as its objects of investigation. To perform a systematic comparative analysis of lexical richness and syntactic complexity features of the two types of educational discourse, two sub-corpora, which are the Zhang-Xuefeng Corpus (ZXC) and the Expert-Edu Corpus (EEC) are created respectively. The overview of the adopted corpora used within this study is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Basic Information of the Corpora**

Corpus	Number of texts	Number of characters
Zhang-Xuefeng Corpus (ZXC)	36	2,351,482
Expert-Edu Corpus (EEC)	27	2,185,236

ZXC corpus has been mostly derived through the publicly available speeches and live-streaming texts on college entrance examination and postgraduate entrance examination topics spoken by Zhang Xuefeng in social media outlets including Bilibili and Douyin. Firstly, a manual transcription of the live streaming and speech audio is done on a per-sentence basis and oral gaps, repeats and speech errors are corrected. Many rounds of human screening were conducted and irrelevant greetings, advertisements, and nonsensical interaction elements were removed and textual formatting was standardised. Lastly, there are 36 valid texts that contain oral further education guidance to the population at large.

EEC corpus is compiled during the process of collecting lectures, handouts of courses and academic sharing materials created by university educators and famous instructors in postgraduate entrance examination training institutions. Synchronized text calibration and normalised cleaning are performed,

and unqualified data are deleted and layout styling is equalized. All 27 final valid texts are included, representing professional continuing education counseling aimed at student groups. The two corpora are consistent with a strong level of thematic similarity (college entrance examination and postgraduate entrance examination) and contextual situations (public sharing and lectures), and thus the thematic and situational variables do not interfere with any language properties and the comparative analysis is valid both in terms of validity and comparability (Lu, 2010).

Since the chosen syntactic analysis instrument in the given paper does not handle non-English text identification, full-text translation is performed under the functional equivalence theory through corpus cleaning. The process of translation aims to reconstruct the semantic meaning and the style of speech of the source texts with consideration of differences in language between Chinese and English. Based on the concept of semantic equivalence, sentence structure undergoes change to accommodate the convention of expression in English and the translations of professional vocabulary in education are standardized in both corpuses (Norris & Ortega, 2009). Post first translation, there will be an overall process of proofreading and polishing of sentences with reference to the original documents to fix expression distortions and minimize the level of translation loss. The formats of documents are subsequently adjusted consistently and the layout of text is uniformed to ensure that the requirements of subsequent syntactic tools are met, thus forming a well-informed basis of corpus that can be used to analyze the syntactic complexity quantitatively.

Lexical richness is measured by using AntConc in terms of data analysis. Tokens and types are removed and Type Token Ratio (TTR) is determined as a measurement of lexical richness. The syntactic complexity analysis is done through NeoSCA which is a modified version of L2SCA. Four indicators of syntactic complexity - including unit length, subordinate structure, coordinate structure, and phrasal structure - are used to be fitted to the precise quantitative analysis of oral educational discourse. Raw data are tested on their normality and homogeneity of variance in order using SPSS. Once the necessary conditions to conduct the parametric tests are met, then independent-samples t-test is taken to determine the lexical and syntactic measures between two corpora, and the significance level is chosen to be  $\alpha = 0.05$  in order to evaluate the statistical significance of differences among linguistic features between both corpora.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### *4.1 Lexical Richness*

As is clear in Table 2, both the lexical richness of Zhang Xuefeng educational discourse and the educational discourse of university experts is exhibited. Based on the statistical findings of the lexical richness, it is determined that the Zhang Xuefeng Corpus and the Expert Corpus differ significantly, as the Expert Corpus can be characterized by a higher level of lexical richness whereas the Zhang Xuefeng Corpus has a relatively lower level of lexical richness.

**Table 2. Analysis Results of Lexical Richness of ZXC and EEC**

Corpus	Number of texts	Types	Tokens	TTR
Zhang-Xuefeng Corpus (ZXC)	36	6,431	426,874	0.0150
Expert-Edu Corpus (EEC)	27	6,727	358,991	0.0187

The results of this study are in line with the implications of available literature on discourse style and communication context. As has been proved by earlier studies, different forms of educational communication discourse tend to possess fixed differences in lexical characteristics and the aims of communication and location of the audience have a direct impact on lexical diversity. The outcomes of the given research contribute to the empirical evidence in regard to those conclusions in the domain of public educational discourse.

It has been reported that, regarding the issue of disciplinary and academic quality, experts working at the universities claim: Ours is one of the best disciplines in this country and it is part of the National Double First-Class program. This statement uses various vocabulary, i.e., discipline, ranks, top, national, Double First-Class, program, formal diction, different selections of word, and exact wording. However, Zhang Xuefeng conveys the very same sentiment of it thusly: The major is super strong, the school is good, and employment will be easy. His language uses many common high frequency words such as major, strong, good, school and job, easily, with large lexical repetition and poor diversity.

The present discrepancy is totally consistent with the statistical findings as well as the TTR values of ZXC (0.0150) and EEC (0.0187) which confirms the fact that expert discourse has a greater lexical richness. Simultaneously, the same conclusion may be inferred based on the already established views in the literature: when talking to a broader audience, an individual tends to use repeated word choices that have a high frequency in their everyday speech, whereas academic language involves increased variety of words used to provide accuracy in expression. The difference in lexical richness between the two kinds of educational discourse exactly confirms this trend<sup>[17]</sup>.

These discrepancies can also be found in the employment opportunities talk. Expert discourse reads: The employment level is high and graduates are competitive in the labor market. This is based on professional and multi-layered language usage including employment, rate, graduates, competitiveness, job, market. Comparatively, Zhang Xuefeng writes: You will certainly be able to find work once you graduate. It is easy and lucrative. His key words include simple words job, graduation, easy pay-well, and repetitive expressions with minimal variance. These two sets of comparisons also confirm the quantitative findings of this research: expert discourse is more lexically diverse whereas the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng is more lexically simplified.

In terms of new media educational communication, the contrast of lexical richness directly represents

the difference in logic of communication of the two kinds of discourse. Lexical usage of Zhang Xuefeng is rather compact and clear. His repetition of high frequency colloquial language reduces the level of audience understanding and simplifies complex information on higher education to the population, which is the essence of his mass popularity. In comparison, expert educational discourse pays more attention to the strictness of academic language. The development of diversified vocabulary allows defining concepts and their reasoning with precision and according to the standard rules of profession-oriented education.

This difference also has pragmatic consequences in the context of public educational communication. The effective dissemination of educational information to people in general requires proper simplification of wording as well as reduction in the use of complex words which will reduce the complexity of the message and enhance its acceptance by the audience. Professional educational situations require, however, that a certain degree of lexical variety be present in order to ensure accuracy and professionalism (He, 2003).

#### 4.2 Unit Length and Sentence Complexity

Table 3 gives the unit length and sentence complexity of Zhang Xuefeng educational discourse and of university education specialists educational discourse, whereas Tables 4 present the comparative analysis findings of unit size and sentence complexity. The total performance of unit size and sentence complexity does not exhibit any substantial difference regarding the average length of sentences across both forms of discourse. In contrast, very important distinctions can be noted by all three indicators, namely, average clause length, average subordinate clause length, and sentence complexity, which indicate a clear diverging trend in the two types of educational discourse (Bi & Zhang, 2016).

**Table 3. Analysis Results of Unit Length and Sentence Complexity of ZXC and EEC**

Measure	M±SD		
	ZXC	EEC	
Unit Length	MLS	15.60±1.33	16.14±1.38
	MLT	14.29±1.45	17.03±1.46
	MLC	8.58±0.84	11.45±1.43
Sentence Complexity	C/S	1.83±0.19	1.42±0.13

**Table 4. Comparison Results of Unit Length and Sentence Complexity Between ZXC and EEC**

Measure	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>CI</i>	
Unit Length	MLS	-1.58	61	0.120	[-1.23, 0.15]
	MLT	-7.36	61	<0.001	[-3.48, -1.99]
	MLC	-10.00	61	<0.001	[-3.44, -2.30]
Sentence Complexity	C/S	0.41	61	<0.001	[0.32, 0.49]

*Note.*  $p < 0.001$  indicates a statistically significant difference.

The result obtained is very consistent with other research conducted earlier. According to Biber et al. (2011), there is the stage theory of syntactic development; they note that complexity is much different between various discourse environments. Consistency in the mean sentence length and high variance of other indicators in the current study confirms the validity of such a proposition.

To illustrate, while developing the concept of disciplinary strength, the expert sentence goes like this: Our discipline has a place among the best in the Russian Federation, it was placed in the National Double First-Class program of the Ministry of Education, and demonstrated high results at the fourth stage of the discipline evaluation. The provided sentence includes a multi-layered information and an entire structure, consisting of more extended sentences on average and more elaborate subordinate structures. In comparison, the expression by Zhang Xuefeng is: This major is powerful, the school is excellent, it is easy to get an employment. Its clauses are short and less rigid, and the length of its clauses is short and the syntax is simple and matches perfectly the differences observed in the MLT and MLC measures.

At the same time, the outcomes agree with syntactic complexity analytical model proposed by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) and Lu and Xu (2016) and fit into the inference of Bao Gui (2009) and Ji Xiaoling (2009) that syntactic properties vary depending on discourse roles. It can demonstrate that discourse context has a significant impact on the selection of syntactic structures.

The other case in point is doctoral programs and competitiveness of disciplines. Professionals use the complex sentences with nested clauses: A department with a first-level doctoral programme normally has a powerful teaching and research department which can help increase its student success rate both academically and in employment. These sentences are more complex syntactically and include more significant embedded structures. Conversely, Zhang Xuefeng has used simple sentences alone: The existence of a doctoral program implies the presence of power. This is true might. With no complex embedding and low syntactic density, his expressions literally represent the extreme discrepancy in the C/S index.

When considered in terms of new media educational communication, these discrepancies reflect the difference in communication approaches adopted by both discourse types. According to Lu (2011), concise syntax could minimize cognitive loads and improve communication efficiency. The syntactic characteristics of the education discourse spoken by Zhang Xuefeng are empirical data to support this standpoint. In order to respond to the new media environment, including live streaming and short videos, he uses economical sentences in pattern and manages the information density to suit the common cognition patterns.

It can be entirely seen as consistent with the perspective that the new media leads to the process of popularization transformation of educational discourse developed by Deng (2008) and Wu and Lin (2021) and also provides numerical evidence of the simple and approachable nature of the educational

discourse of Zhang Xuefeng as explained by Xu (2024) and Cao (2025).

Unlike this, the discourse of education by the experts at the universities is characterized by academic rigor with logical depth being realized by use of a long clause and sub-clause as well as the adherence to the professional educational discourse conventions. It reflects the attitude expressed by Lei (2016) that the style of discourse influences public acceptability. These disparities also support the inference made by Zhang and Peng (2019) regarding the change within the general educational discourse which is evident in the main difference between them that educational discourse is simplified in their expression as an instrument while professionals prioritize rigorism. The research gives empirical data to learn the functional principle of educational discourse in the area of new media.

#### 4.3 Subordinate Structure

The use of subordinate structures in educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng and expert educational discourse in universities are presented in Table 5 and the results of comparison on subordinate structure usage are given in Table 6. According to the general score of each indicator of the subordinate structure, the two forms of educational discourse differ extremely significantly in four indicators, which are the ratio of subordinate clauses, clause density, complexity of the subordinate clauses, and percentage of subordinate clauses. The educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng shows much higher frequency and complexity of using different types of subordinate structures, demonstrating that there exists a distinct deviation between these two types of educational discourse in regard to the implementation of subordinate constructions (Ji, 2015).

**Table 5. Statistical Results of Subordinate Structure Use in ZXC and EEC**

Measure	M±SD		
	ZXC	EEC	
Subordinate Structure	CT/T	0.42±0.06	0.36±0.06
	C/T	1.83±0.19	1.42±0.13
	DC/C	0.36±0.04	0.31±0.05
	DC/T	0.61±0.12	0.48±0.11

**Table 6. Comparison Results of Subordinate Structure Use Between ZXC and EEC**

Measure	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>CI</i>	
Subordinate Structure	CT/T	4.13	61	<0.001	[0.03, 0.10]
	C/T	9.61	61	<0.001	[0.32, 0.49]
	DC/C	4.14	61	<0.001	[0.02, 0.07]
	DC/T	4.37	61	<0.001	[0.07, 0.19]

The obtained finding is very close to the conclusions of studies on language communication and its

syntactic usage. The fact Wu and Lei (2018) have verified based on the meta-analysis: linguistic expression in various discourse contexts has different syntax, and communication goals are the direct predictor of choosing between syntactic structure preferences. The findings of this paper serve as empirical evidence of the validity of these conclusions in the context of the public educational discourse.

To illustrate, experts choose multi-layered subordinate structures in their sentences when discussing topics related to the choice of majors or doctoral program: A field with a primary doctoral programme typically has highly effective faculty and research power that will help its students become more competitive both academically and in employment. In the sentence there is an attributive clause and a supplementary explanatory clause, as well as the standard and full subsidiary constructions. Conversely, Zhang Xuefeng says: Should there be a doctorate program, then it is very strong. It is the true strength. He simply employs plain conditional sentences with barely any nested subordinate structures causing fewer clauses and decreased clause density. Such linguistic behavior is completely consistent with the presented statistics, which confirms the fact that CT/T, C/T, DC/C, and DC/T metrics of Zhang Xuefeng discourse are statistically greater than those of expert discourse.

Moreover, this result resonates with the social communication theory of Xie and Rong (2019). As their study shows, messages aimed at the masses consciously change the linguistic structures so as to fit the comprehension ability of the target audience. The discrepancy between the subordinated construction across two kinds of educational discourse can be precisely described to affirm the important role played by the position of communicators in syntactic selection which also adds to the research dimension of educational communication discourse syntax.

One of the examples involves recommendations on how to apply to college. Experts use full subordinate sentences with adverbial clauses of conditions and purpose: While selecting majors, students need to take into consideration the power of disciplines in order to be able to make sounder choices. The sentence contains explicit hierarchy links and distinct subordinate links. However, as an alternative, Zhang Xuefeng chooses to express his ideas in simple form, without using subordinate constructions: All you do is examine the majors, the university, and jobs. Its sentence construction is very simplistic with no clauses at all. The comparison yet again indicates that educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng has lesser and less compact subordinate structures whereas expert discourse utilizes subordinate structures in a more formalized and controlled way. It is completely in accordance with the significance test findings of the four indicators in this research, which gives intuitive textual justification to the research findings.

In terms of new media educational communication, these are the ideal descriptions of the fundamental communication technique of simplicity as a weapon. Being an online educational communicator, Zhang Xuefeng will always choose syntactic constructions that ensure reducing the level of audience understanding and enhancing the information transmission efficiency. It does not mean that the high-density use of subordinate structures is an attempt to increase the complexity and instead it can be

used in order to combine disparate higher education data into condensed sentences, it uses consistent expressions to exclude repetitive explanations and make unclear university entrance examination and graduate school entrance examination regulations and examination preparation knowledge simple and easy to understand. This is his main tool in overcoming the obstacles of professional talk and disseminating broadly.

In contrast, academic discourse of university professionals supports the strictness of professional educational correspondence with a lesser degree of subordination constructions. Its focus is on simple and normalized syntax to facilitate the logical sense and correct wording to satisfy the expressive needs of specialist educational teaching. These syntactic variations are a direct manifestation of the communicative divergence between these two sorts of educational discourse. Popular and easy-to-understand syntactic forms create mass communication opportunities in Zhang Xuefeng discourse, but the professional academic discourse preserves its professional status with standard and strict writing styles. The findings may also have consequences regarding the application of the idea of educational communication in the public interest: in cases of educational communication of mass society, simpler and easier language has been found to be more effective in communication and can lead to the successful dissemination of educational information (Jiang & Wang, 2015).

#### 4.4 Coordinate Structure

Table 7 represents the use of coordinate structures in Zhang Xuefeng's educational discourse and university experts' educational discourse, and Table 8 shows the comparative analysis of coordinate structures. Considering the combined performance of different indices of coordinate structure, the differences among three indices (ratio of coordinate phrases to clause, ratio of coordinate phrases to sentence, and sentence coordination level) are extremely significant between Zhang Xuefeng's educational discourse and university experts' educational discourse. The presence of differentiation between two types of educational discourses is evident in their use of coordinate structures (Kuang, 2008).

**Table 7. Statistical Results of Coordinate Structure of ZXC and EEC**

Measure	M±SD		
	ZXC	EEC	
Subordinate Structure	CP/C	0.12±0.04	0.28±0.08
	CP/T	0.20±0.07	0.20±0.07
	T/S	1.09±0.04	0.95±0.04

**Table 8. Comparison Results of Coordinate Structure Between ZXC and EEC**

Measure		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>CI</i>
Subordinate Structure	CP/C	-9.74	61	<0.001	[-0.19, -0.13]

CP/T	-9.52	61	<0.001	[-0.26, -0.17]
T/S	13.33	61	<0.001	[0.12, 0.17]

This result closely correlates with the results of the research concerning the separation of the syntactic roles. Discourse functions were found to be a direct factor affecting the choice of syntactic structure preference as reported by Xu et al. (2013) in their studies on syntactic development in student argumentative essays. The discrepancy of the coordinate structure between the two categories of discourse related to education in this research confirms the validity of this law to be used under the condition of the public educational discourse. As an example, in the issue of the whole disciplinary organization, scholars use uniform and properly organized coordinate structures in the phrase: The university includes such areas of education as liberal arts, science, engineering, medicine among others which are all developed in a proper manner. The sentence incorporates more than two parallel coordinative phrases with the full structure and the explicit hierarchy, hence more than half of the sentences are coordinative phrases. On the contrary, Zhang Xuefeng employs disconnected and nonformal coordination in the formulation: It is nice, it is strong, it is great, and it is not difficult to get a job. He just enumerates individual adjectives with informal coordinative construction and isolated constructions.

This comparison between the two groups of expressions indicates that the CP/C and CP/T measures of the educational discourse of university experts are greater than the respective values of the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng, which is perfectly aligned with the quantitative findings and substantiates the research results of coordinate structure difference in the present paper. At the same time, the outcomes are in accordance with the conclusion made by Wu and Lei (2018) via meta-analysis that syntactic properties serve as stable indicators of various discourse style types. It also suggests that the variations in the positions of the communicators might also be explicitly observed in the choice and use of language structures. Besides, on the subject of school benefits, experts use proper and balanced patterns of coordinate sentences: The campus is green, the environment is beautiful, and the relationship between the teachers and students is harmonious. The three clauses are structured in parallel, both with strict logic, and systematic coordination. Comparatively, Zhang Xuefeng uses repetitive and monotonous simple coordination: The school is good, the teachers are good, the food is good, where the structures are highly simplified without any variety.

This comparative analysis also confirms the fact that the educational discourse of university experts uses standard coordinates more in order to present all the information, whereas Zhang Xuefengs educational discourse makes coordinate structures simpler to achieve simplicity and efficiency and it is completely consistent with the large differences between the three indicators and can be supported with an intuitive textual proof to this work. Moreover, the result adds up to the multi-dimensional syntactic analysis model suggested by Lu and Xu (2016) and brings fresh empirical data on the syntactic properties of new media educational discourse.

In terms of the educational communication of the new media, the differences mentioned above correctly depict the difference in the communication logic of the two types of discourse. According to the research conducted by Xie and Rong (2019), popularized and fragmented expressions have more potentials to increase interaction among audiences. The coordinate structure characteristics of the educational speech of Zhang Xuefeng is a practical embodiment of this standpoint. In order to suit the context of new media including the short video and live broadcasting, he will use less coordinate sentences but deliver key information in easy sentence forms, according to the way the population would like to receive information quickly. It is completely in line with the assumption that the public language has to be adjusted to the audience cognitive level as stated by Chen and Song (2020), and also gives quantitative support to the simple and robust-language discourse style of Zhang Xuefeng described by Xu (2024) and Cao (2025).

University experts educational discourse, however, emphasizes more on the academic rigour and logical explication. It reflects the full-scale representation of information with a greater percentage of coordinate words and fits into the rules of expression of professional educational discourse, which is in line with the argument that a professional discourse is supposed to be logically stable as it was argued by Deng (2008). This divergence also supports the conclusion made by Wu and Lin (2021), that the new media helps popularization transformation of educational discourse. That clearly identifies the main contradiction, which is that Zhang Xuefeng educational discourse is informative and simple and short, whereas professional educational discourse is logical and thorough to present various empirical evidence of the mechanism of educational discourse communication in the new media environment.

#### 4.5 Specific Phrase Structure

Application of phrase structures in educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng and educational discourse of university experts can be seen in Table 9, and comparative analysis of the phrase structures presented in Table 10. When it comes to the general performance of different indicators of particular phrase structures, there are disparities in noun phrase related indicators and number of verb phrases per sentence in Zhang Xuefengs educational discourse versus university experts educational discourse. Particularly, the educational discourse of university experts achieves better values in the measures of noun phrases, whereas the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng records much better values in the measures of verb phrases. The two forms of educational discourse have a clear distinction in their use of the phrase structures.

**Table 9 Statistical Results of Phrase Structure of ZXC and EEC**

Measure	M±SD		
	ZXC	EEC	
Phrase Structure	CN/C	0.79±0.14	1.27±0.23
	CN/T	1.31±0.19	1.88±0.27



and highly simplistic nouns forms. The difference between the two groups of expressions also confirms the fact that university experts make their educational discourse on noun phrases in order to achieve precise communication, whereas Zhang Xuefeng makes his educational language more simple and straightforward by using a verb structure. It is completely consistent with the fact that the score of Zhang Xuefeng in the VP/T indicator is much greater, which gives a solid textual support of the present research.

In the context of new media education communication, the given divergences are properly representing the difference in communication logic of the two types of discourse. Lu (2011) suggested that simpler expressions can decrease cognitive load, enhance communication efficiency and the phrase characteristics of Zhang Xuefengs educational discourse are a manifestation of the mentioned perspective. In order to fit into new media environments including short videos and life streaming, he simplifies the complex development of noun phrases and communicates key ideas using simpler verbs phrases as per the custom of the population to receive information in short snippets. It is fully in accordance with the conclusion by Xie and Rong (2019) that popularized expressions have a higher probability of causing public interaction, as well as offers quantitative support of Zhang Xuefeng expression style simplicity concluded by Xu (2024) and Cao (2025).

Educational discussions of university experts focus more on the academic rigor and conceptual correctness. (Liu, 2021) It achieves the exact meaning of information by increasing the proportion of noun phrases and adhering to the norms of expression of professional educational discourse, which contrasts with the perspective that public academic discourse ought to be rigorous and intelligible as stated by Chen and Song Fazhi (2020). The same difference supports the finding of the transformation of public educational discourse that was introduced by Zhang and Peng (2019). This clearly shows the underlying difference that is present, i.e., in their educational discourse Zhang Xuefeng uses an educational discourse based on verbs, short and simple, whereas professional academic discourse on education uses noun expansions that are precise and rigorous with many different empirical bases of communication mechanisms of educational discourse in the new media landscape.

## 5. Conclusion

With corpus linguistics as theoretical basis, the research will choose Zhang Xuefengs educational discourse and university expert educational discourse as comparative corpus and quantitatively analyze it in various dimensions such as unit length, syntactic complexity, subordinate construction, coordinate construction and phrase construction. The present paper is answering all three research questions completely and investigating the linguistic characteristics and the logic of communication of the two kinds of educational discourse.

As an answer to the first research question, this paper defines the general aspects of the educational discourse of Zhang Xuefeng. The lexical wealth is small as it is largely influenced by the frequent use of simple and colloquial words. On the level of the structure, only an average sentence length

resembles a professional discourse whereas all other syntactic measures are minimized. Adopting economical subordinate clauses, lax coordinate constructions and a small amount of complicated noun phrases, it shows indicative properties of being popular, easily understandable and compact in structure<sup>19</sup>.

Answering the second research question, it can be stated that there is no much difference between the two discourses regarding the average sentence length and professional education discourse. The findings of extremely significant differences are made in the most indicative factors, which include type-token ratio, average complexity of clauses, the mean clause length (MCL), the average number of subclauses (MAS) per clause, syntactic complexity, the percentage of subordinate and coordinated structures, and the density of noun phrases. The discourse of Zhang Xuefeng uses simpler lexis and syntax and professional educational discourse is more stringent and lexically varied and thus divides popularization and specialization (Xu, Liu, & Wang, 2024).

The third research question was answered by simplifying its lexis and syntax and making it simple enough to minimize the level of cognition in the audience, to ensure it fits the fragmentation nature and speed of communication in the short video and live streaming of new media and also be able to communicate information effectively with a simple expression (Zhu & Wang, n.d.) which has been the main cause of its global distribution.

The obtained outcomes also verify that the two forms of discussion will have entirely divergent directions of expression because of subject and group of audiences in communication, communication situations and explicitly explain the essence of what is meant by simplicity as a weapon in mass educational communication. The present work complements the research gap in the available quantitative literature on Zhang Xuefeng educational discourse, and it is of great theoretical and practical importance. The paper offers an empirical foundation to effective public educational information delivery and improvement of communication language strategies.

There are some specific shortcomings concerning this work. The study is restricted to examining merely one educational area of college entrance test and post graduate entrance test and has a very small scope of corpus cases, thus, the overall applicability of the results to the study requires more validation. Further, this article also just analyses in the syntactic dimension, but lacks extensive analysis that incorporates both the lexical and emotional dimensions, which results in the lack of a complete comprehension of the communication mechanism.

The future studies may enhance the range of corpus to examine educational discourse in various disciplines, develop a holistic analytic model incorporating multi-dimensional linguistic markers and continue investigating the relationship between discourse properties and communicative outcomes. Also it can develop the scientific basis of the new media educational discourse, which will allow better supporting the balance between specialization and popularization in educational communication.

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Love can conquer all hardships.

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