



**Investigation of Communicative Tasks in Senior High School
Coursebooks in China**

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Master of Arts in Teaching English as an International Language**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out the communicative levels of the improved coursebooks used in China, students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities after using the new coursebooks and the relationship among them, addressing four questions: 1. What are the communicative levels of the coursebooks used in China? 2. What are students' general proficiency levels after studying the coursebooks? 3. What are students' oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks? 4. What are the relationships among the communicative levels of the coursebooks, students' proficiency levels and students' oral communicative abilities? One of the two sets of the coursebooks named *Senior English for China* which was more widely used was evaluated. The subjects were 59 third year senior high school students in China. Three instruments were used: the task evaluation criteria, the oral communication test and the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE).

The results showed that the coursebooks used were highly communicative as a whole but with weaknesses in input and activity; the students' proficiency levels were at the average level like before; the students' oral communication abilities were still very poor; there is no relationship between the communicative levels of the coursebooks and students' proficiency levels, and students' proficiency levels is not related to students' oral communicative abilities, either. The findings suggest that the weaknesses in input and activity of the coursebooks may be one of the causes of students' poor oral communicative abilities

because of the lack of authentic input and communicative activities that require students to exchange information and thus communicate. However, it was also possible that other factors might have come into play.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present introductory information of the study. It consists of six main parts: rationale of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Rationale of the study

As English develops into a lingua Franca, more and more people from many countries need to learn English for communication (Byrne, 1976). McKay (2002) points out that young people and adults are studying English today in classrooms around the world since English is an international language that plays important roles in all aspects of life in our age of globalization. However, not all English language learners are successful in their language used to communicate.

In China, many teachers and educators complain that Chinese students' oral communicative abilities are poor and it is difficult to make them communicate freely or express their ideas clearly (Liu & Yu, 1998; Liao, 2004; Rao, 2001; Xu, 2004; Zhuang, 2007). Even students complain about themselves on their inability to communicate. In my experience in learning English as a foreign language in a Chinese-speaking context for many years, I have noticed that many Chinese students were very weak in oral communication in English. They have difficulties in English oral communication, even those who can get high scores in English standardized proficiency tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS. This is especially apparent when Chinese students go to study abroad. Many found that they could not understand others or express themselves in communication with others when they first went abroad. This problem has been a concern to many teachers, students and experts in China for a long time. In attempts to rectify this problem, many factors affecting Chinese students' oral communicative abilities, such as coursebooks, teaching

methodology, education system, National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), learning styles and strategies have been discussed.

As this is a matter of serious concern, English education reform was called for and the government has been devoting itself to the reformation for many years in many aspects. Firstly, as the communicative language teaching (CLT) is widely recommended and used, the Ministry of Education and schools promote many activities and competitions to encourage teachers to apply CLT in their teaching (Liao, 2004). Secondly, the proficiency test (NCEE) which is used to evaluate students' proficiency levels when they graduate from senior high schools has been improved to be more communicative year by year. Thirdly, the coursebooks have been revised many times to be more communicative. However, the Chinese students' inability to communicate orally is still common (Chen, 2009; Fan, 2009; Cai, 2009).

One of the causes of the problem of Chinese students' inability to communicate might be the coursebooks used, because coursebooks are the reflection of teaching objectives and the tools used to achieve teaching objectives. Coursebooks are very important in language teaching and learning (Richards & Renandya, 2002); they facilitate the teaching. Cunningsworth (1995) argues that coursebooks are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs. In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), not only teachers need to teach communicatively, but also the coursebooks have to be communicative. In this respect, authentic texts and communicative activities are very important. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Gatbonton & Segalowitz (2005) point out that adherents of CLT advocate that the use of language materials authentic to native speakers of the target language is the best way to overcome the typical problem that students cannot transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world and to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations. Hence, a good coursebook needs to contain authentic materials to provide opportunities for students to be exposed to authentic language. However, since there are lots of coursebooks available for use in language teaching and learning, evaluation is needed to find out whether they serve the purpose of teaching for communication. In order to check whether the materials are communicative, Nunan (1989) deals at length with communicative tasks and provides a framework for analyzing communicative tasks with the assumptions that

these tasks can facilitate the development of communicative ability.

Liu (2011), an expert of People's Education Press, summarizes the coursebook improvements that have been done in China as follows. From the late 1970s until now, China high school English language education has experienced three major steps of reformation. The first was the publication of the curriculum. The other two steps were the reforms of the curriculum. Each of these three steps produced some new sets of coursebooks, all of which had their own characteristics and concepts which were improved from time to time with the development of the society and the world. The three steps of reforms represent the development of the English teaching and learning at senior high schools in China.

Coursebook is a factor affecting the achievement of the students. On the other hand, another factor affecting students' oral communicative abilities is teacher, since teacher is the director in the classroom. Teacher organizes the class activities using coursebooks and teaching methodology. Coursebooks provide source on the contents and methods to use in teaching, but teacher is the user who can decide how to use the coursebooks. He/She can adapt the content of the coursebook and different teaching methodology to cultivate students' abilities. So, teacher who uses the coursebook and carries out class activities is another factor affecting students' oral communicative abilities.

Another factor that might have an effect on the outcome of the English language teaching in China is National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which is a proficiency test used to evaluate students' abilities when they graduate from high schools. NECC is very important for Chinese students because it is nearly the only way to decide whether they can go to colleges or what kinds of colleges they can enter. The total score of the test is 150 and the passing point is 90 (60%). Most of the students take the examination, and their scores are used as a criterion for college admission. NCEE is the most important aim for the English teaching and learning at senior high schools. Students spend most of their time in training themselves in achieving high scores in the NCEE. Apart from that, since speaking test is not included in the NCEE because of the different education resources of schools different location, testing conditions and scoring fairness, speaking practice is not emphasized in teaching and learning resulting in students' low oral communicative

ability.

As there are many factors contributing to the students' abilities to communicate and coursebook is one of them that the government has focused on, this study sets out to investigate the communicative levels of the coursebooks and whether they could facilitate students' learning to communicate. As there has been a concern that Chinese students' oral communicative abilities are poor even if they can achieve high scores in the proficiency test, it is necessary to check whether this is true. To do this, the level of their proficiency can be measured via the use of NCEE. However, as the speaking part is not included in the NCEE, it is necessary to conduct an oral communication test to ascertain students' oral communicative abilities. The information about students' oral communicative abilities and proficiency levels together with the coursebook evaluation results may help reflect how effective the coursebooks are on students' ability to communicate.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The main purposes of this study are:

- (1) to investigate the communicative levels of the coursebooks widely used at many senior high schools in China,
- (2) to find out students' proficiency levels after studying the coursebooks,
- (3) to ascertain students' oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks,
- (4) to explore the relationships among the communicative levels of the coursebooks used, students' general proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities.

1.3 Research questions

Four research questions were addressed in this study:

- (1) What are the communicative levels of the coursebooks used in China?
- (2) What are students' general proficiency levels after studying the coursebooks?

- (3) What are students' oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks?
- (4) What are the relationships among the communicative levels of the coursebooks, students' proficiency levels and students' oral communicative abilities?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study can help teachers and scholars in many senior high schools in China to understand the communicative levels of the coursebooks and whether the coursebooks can help to enhance students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities.

Through the comparison of students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities and matching the levels of coursebooks, students' proficiency and oral communicative abilities, it may be possible to see whether the coursebooks is one of the causes of students' inability to communicate. These will provide some suggestions for solutions to the problems of students' inability to communicate.

In addition, although this is a case study of a senior high school in a city in China, because the coursebooks are widely used at many senior high schools all over China, the results can possibly be applied to many schools in the city.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

1.5.1 Scope

This study is to analyze the communicative levels of the coursebooks used in the three years of senior high school in a city in China, to determine whether the coursebooks are communicative, to investigate students' general English proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks at one senior high school at Henan province in China, and to find out the relationships among communicative levels of the coursebook used, students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities. The set of coursebook analyzed in this study was one of the

two main sets available to choose for use in senior high schools in China, though the subjects in the study are from one school only.

1.5.2 Limitation

There are two main sets of coursebook used in China. In this study, only one set was analyzed, so it cannot represent the whole education system. Also, this is a case study in one senior urban high school in China. Since the situations at senior high schools in the cities and the countryside are quite different, the results cannot be generalized to all schools.

Apart from that, there are many factors that might cause students' inabilities to communicate, such as teacher, school policy, student, teaching methodology, education system, National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), coursebooks, learning styles and strategies. In this study, only the results of the coursebook improvement were investigated. Thus, the causes of students' poor oral communicative abilities should be interpreted with caution.

1.6 Definition of terms

There are three important terms used in this study which are defined as follows:

1. National College Entrance Examination (NCEE):

The "National College Entrance Examination" (or "Gaokao" in Pinyin) is an annually held examination in the mainland of the People's Republic of China in June. It is a proficiency test used to measure students' abilities when they graduate from high schools and required for college admission. It is usually taken by students in their last year of high school, and there has been no age restriction since 2001. NECC is the direction of the senior high school education for Chinese students because it is nearly the only way to enter colleges in China and students can get better jobs after graduation from colleges. It includes many subjects, but in this study it concentrates

on the English test only. The English paper consists of listening (20 multiple choice items), grammar and vocabulary (15 multiple choice items), cloze test (20 multiple choice items), reading comprehension (20 multiple choice items), error identification and correction (a passage including 10 errors) and essay writing (about 100 words). The test takes two hours and the total score is 150 points, and the passing point is 90 (60%).

2. Task:

Task is similar to activities. In this study, it refers to activities in which the learners are asked to use the target language in order to achieve a particular outcome within a particular context (e.g. solving a problem; planning a meeting; selecting candidates for an interview) (Tomlinson, 2011). Tasks include communicative and non-communicative tasks. Nunan (1989) defined a communicative task as ‘a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form’.

In this study, tasks are all the activities that are provided to introduce, practice or consolidate the language learned. They are the tasks in the coursebooks which can be made communicative via six aspects: goals, input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings (Nunan, 1989).

Some examples of task are provided in Appendix E 1 and E 2.

3. Activity:

In this study, activity refers to one aspect of task. It specifies what learners will actually do with the input. Activities should be authentic and designed for skill using or skill getting.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information on the coursebooks, oral communicative ability and National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). This section reviews the following issues: coursebook and syllabus, the role of coursebooks, objectives of China English education, National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), communication and communicative competence, oral communicative ability, communicative language teaching, communicative task and related studies.

2.1 Coursebook and syllabus

Coursebooks (or textbooks) are used by most teachers of English, but what is a coursebook? Richards and Schmidt (2002) define a coursebook in language teaching as “a book (usually as part of a series of books) containing all the materials necessary for a particular type of language learner at a particular level (e.g. intermediate level adults)”. Such a book is typically based on an integrated or multi-skills syllabus i.e. one that contains sections on grammar functions, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is a definition based on the content in details. Sheldon (1988) provides a definition of a coursebook from another aspect. She defines a coursebook as “a published book, most often produced for commercial gain, whose explicit aim is to assist foreign learners of English in improving their linguistic knowledge and/or communicative ability”.

Cunningsworth (1984) points out that published coursebooks are normally written by experienced and well-qualified people. Coursebooks are divided into two types, home-made and commercial coursebooks. The difference between these two types of coursebooks is the audience. The context of commercial coursebooks is broader with a wider audience than home-made coursebooks and may be different from the context where they are used (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986). Dubin & Olshtain

(1986, p. 168) also point out that home-made coursebooks are produced for a local audience, for a particular school, a particular system, a ministry, or for an entire country according to the context and the local culture of where they are used, which can make students familiar with what is learning, while "commercial materials are for as wide an audience as possible".

Richards and Schmidt (2002) point out that a coursebook is typically based on an integrated or multi-skills syllabus. A syllabus is a statement of what is to be taught in a sequence for teaching purposes (Cunningsworth, 1984). Coursebook writers must order the materials according to some syllabus and the syllabus is expressed by what the coursebook teaches and in what order.

There are many different types of syllabus. They can be categorized into analytic and synthetic syllabus. Nunan (1988) cited Wilkins (1975) that an analytic syllabus is organized for learners to learn the whole language and the kinds of language performance. Nunan (1988) concludes that the starting point of analytic syllabus is the communicative purposes (i.e. how to use the language) instead of the grammatical system of the language. Wilkins (1975) also describes the synthetic syllabus as a teaching and learning process from parts of language separately and step by step to the whole structure of language built up. According to Yalden (1983), the synthetic syllabus produces a grammatical syllabus (or structural syllabus), while the analytic approach produces a functional syllabus. Moreover, syllabus types reflect different approaches. Following the grammatical syllabus, a grammar-translation, an audio-lingual method or a combination approach may be used (Yalden, 1983), while the communicative language teaching may be used following the analytic syllabus in which task-based approach may be applied.

There are six basic syllabus types in language teaching. Actually, the combinations of two or more of the types are used in real teaching. For a given course, one type of syllabus usually dominates, while other types of content may be combined with it. Each of the six types of syllabus has their own main characteristics. The structural (formal) syllabus focuses on teaching the forms and structures, usually grammatical, of the language. The notional/functional syllabus emphasizes the functions that are performed when language is used, or of the notions that language is used to express. The real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used

are the focus of the situational syllabus. The skill-based syllabus puts the specific abilities that may play a part in using language as the main points. The task-based syllabus is to use tasks to bring the real world into the classroom to provide students the opportunities for language learning. Tasks are basic element in this syllabus. The content-based syllabus is to teach some content or information using the language that the students are also learning. In general, some types of syllabus are based on structure, and some are based most on language use. Language is a relationship between form and meaning. Most instruction includes both but varies in terms of emphasis.

2.2 The role of coursebooks

Coursebooks (or ‘textbooks’) are the basic and necessary tools used in language teaching and learning. They are the inseparable part of the teaching and learning processes. Rivers (1981) points out that the importance of textbooks can not be underestimated. She says that textbooks determine the major part of classroom teaching and the students’ out-of-class learning. Coursebooks and supporting materials are often used by English teachers because they are considered to be essential constituents in EFL classrooms. However, coursebooks provide teachers and students a resource in which aims, objectives and learner needs can be realized. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest that the textbook is an almost universal element of English language teaching. The teaching-learning situation is not complete if it lacks relevant coursebooks. Sheldon (1988) also points out that coursebooks represent the efforts of English teaching and learning program and offer considerable advantages for students and teachers in the EFL classroom. School administrators, English teachers and students often prefer ready-made and published coursebooks because they are formal, systematic and credible. Thus, the coursebooks have gradually become the most important tool for language instruction. They are considered as an unavoidable element of the curriculum because they are not only the reflection of course objectives but also provide content and items for syllabus.

Coursebooks are important for teaching and learning, and the advantages and disadvantages of using coursebooks in teaching and learning are discussed by many

researchers. Some argue that coursebooks are very useful tools, which provide learners a sense of system, cohesion and progress, and they help to achieve consistency and continuation, while others say that they can obstruct teachers' initiation. Cunningsworth (1995) claims that in English teaching and learning, coursebook plays a positive role of:

- (1) an effective resource for self-directed learning or self-access work,
- (2) an effective resource for presentation material,
- (3) a source of ideas and activities for learner' practice and communicative interaction,
- (4) a reference source for students on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and other aspects of knowledge,
- (5) a syllabus which reflects pre-determined learning objectives, and
- (6) a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence.

Coursebooks as preplanned teaching materials may also have some possible disadvantages (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Some researchers state that coursebooks lack freedom in their coverage of language items and provide teachers little free space. Allwright (1994) points out that coursebooks are too inflexible and generally reflect the pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors. These indicate that coursebooks determine the content, methods and processes in language teaching and learning. More recently, Tomlinson (2008) claims that many ELT materials (especially global coursebooks) currently play a significant role in making many learners of English as a second, foreign or other languages fail to even acquire basic competence in English and to develop the ability to use the language successfully. The failure could happen if the focus is on the teaching of linguistic items rather than on the provision of opportunities for acquisition and development. As well, the teachers focus on teaching linguistic items because that's what they are expected of and required to do by administrators, parents, publishers, and learners. Ur (1996) raises the problem of the contradictions between the coursebook and the language learning process and tries to provide solutions to the problem. He points out that there are a lot of contradictions between what a

coursebook can offer the students and what the students need in order to communicate effectively in English. The coursebooks are used by many learners and most coursebooks assume that all the learners can learn the same things in the same way and in the same class. However, learners are quite different in their learning. In order to make all the students get the same knowledge, as many variety and choice as possible in the teaching and learning process are suggested to be included.

Therefore, in formal educational settings, especially for language teaching, the necessity of coursebooks may lead the way to the necessity to explore the coursebooks in order to select a suitable one that closely reflects the aims, methods and values of the teaching program, since a good coursebook can help both teachers and learners to achieve the course aims.

However, the situation in China is different. The coursebooks used in China are uniform (Xiao, 2010). The Ministry of Education provides limited sets of coursebooks written according to the objectives of senior high school English education to be chosen for teachers and senior high schools. At the time this study was conducted, there were two sets available, both of which were designed by the committee under the management of the Ministry of Education. They are based on communicative syllabus type integrating both form and function of English language but with the emphasis on form. In most senior high schools, students study these coursebooks with many related exercises to consolidate the knowledge. Many teachers and students look at the coursebooks as teachers, dictionaries, authorities and resources.

In conclusion, it can be said that the choices of coursebooks are limited and they are supposed to strictly reflect the objectives of the course. The questions posed by this study are whether they promote the ability to communicate and help build English proficiency in students.

2.3 Objectives of China English Education

Course objectives are important means to achieve the aims of education. They can specifically indicate the directions of the course progress, mark the scope of the course, suggest the emphasis of the course, determine the selection and organization

of the course content and guide the teaching and learning process and the evaluations. Course objectives are not only the starting point of the course, but also the fate of the curriculum. English teaching and learning start from the understanding of objectives and end with the objectives achieved. Objectives are the direction included in the whole process of teaching, learning and evaluation.

The general objectives of the English course at senior high schools set by the Ministry of Education (2003) in China are as follows:

- (1) to consolidate and expand the basic English knowledge of students,
- (2) to develop students' integrated skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing,
- (3) to improve students' communicative abilities in using English, and
- (4) to focus on improving reading skills.

It clearly shows that the objectives put more weight on the development of reading skill, though the communicative abilities are also included.

2.4 National College Entrance Examination (NCEE)

National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) is a proficiency test for Chinese students, which is carried out by the Ministry of Education in China annually in June.

In most places, students list their college/university preferences before knowing the scores of the exam (a few regions allow modifications after students learn about their score). The preferences are given in four classes (early admissions, key universities, regular universities, technical colleges); each can contain 4-6 choices in school and program. The exam is administered over 3 days. Three subjects are mandatory everywhere: Chinese language, Mathematics and a foreign language--usually English language, but may also be substituted by Japanese or Russian. The other 6 standard subjects are 3 science subjects (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) and 3 humanities subjects (History, Geography and Political Education). Applicants to science/engineering or art/humanities programs typically take 1-3 from the respective

category. Currently, the actual requirement varies from province to province. Applicants to the following kinds of programs are also screened by additional criteria: some art departments (e.g. audition), military and police schools (political screening and physical exam) and some sports programs (tryout).

Although China's higher education is moving towards the direction of diversity, currently examination is still essentially the only criteria for college admissions. Poor performance on the test always means giving up on that goal. In China, not all students have the chance to study in post-secondary education. If students want to attend colleges, they have to spend most of their waking moments studying hard. If they fail in their first attempt, some of them choose to repeat the last year of high school life and give it another try in the following year. This is often done especially in the past and in the economically poor areas of modern China. Fear of the test is such that students who can afford the cost will often go abroad in order to study at the college level.

The NCEE is an important constituent in the process of English teaching and learning. It exerts influence on English teaching and learning, which is commonly described as "backwash" in language instruction. In 2003, the Ministry of Education enacted and promulgated the new Regular Senior English Curriculum Standard, which put forward the assessing criteria and principles of English learning. The new assessing criteria and principles aim to exert a positive impact on teaching and learning in senior high schools. The effects of NCEE on the context of the new curriculum standard, and China's senior high school English teaching and learning were investigated by some researchers (Xu, 2004; Ding, 2002; Lu, 2009) and the great backwash effects of NCEE on senior English teaching and learning were found. Positive backwash effects are promoting reforms of NCEE, helping improve English teaching and learning, enhancing students' integrated skills, etc. One negative backwash effect is adding pressure to teachers and students. Many suggestions were also provided by teachers and researchers to promote the beneficial backwash effects of the NCEE and hinder the negative ones, such as further innovating the test format of NCEE to take in more productive skills such as spoken test and translation; not using the NCEE as the single means in selecting students for universities; using students' NCEE scores in a proper way, for example, using the scores as a reference

and not the only criterion of entering universities; and not relying the NCEE results too heavily.

NCEE is used in this study as a test of proficiency after the completion of senior high school study. Almost all of the students who study in the third year at senior high school take the test organized by the Ministry of Education and the papers are written by the committee from the Ministry of Education.

2.5 Communication and communicative competence

Nowadays, teaching and learning language to be able to use it 'structurally correct' is only one part of what is included in language ability. Learning English not only just refers to learning the language grammar, but also includes using the language to communicate. In English language learning, it is important to distinguish between "learning that" and "knowing how". That means that we need to distinguish between knowing various grammar rules and being able to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating. Grammar rules can be learned and rehearsed through communicative activities which can help students to learn and communicate. Here is when the notion of competence and performance steps in because one may learn a lot of grammar but is unable to communicate. Chomsky (1965) describes "competence" as one's implicit or explicit knowledge of the system of language, and "performance" as one's actual production and comprehension of knowledge in specific instances of language use. He also believes that the actual performance does not reflect the competence because of some factors affecting it. It is usually said that competence is what a person knows, while performance is what a person does.

Hymes (1970) uses the term 'communicative competence' to refer to the more general sort of knowledge of grammaticality and ability to be grammatical. Communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. Hymes (1979) claims that communicative competence includes four aspects knowing whether or not something is formally possible (grammatically acceptable), understandable to human beings (feasibility), in line with social norms (appropriateness in a social context) and in fact done (what the language performance

entails). Similarly, Hedge (2000) points out that there are five main components of communicative competence which include linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence and fluency. Savignon (1983, p. 22) also defines communicative competence as “the learner’s ability to function in a truly communicative setting that is in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information, both linguistic and paralinguistic of one or more interlocutors.” Another definition provided by Schiefelbusch (1984, p. 5) is that “communicative competence is the totality of experience-derived knowledge and skill that enables a speaker to produce utterances that are structurally well-formed, referentially accurate, and socially appropriate in culturally determined communication contexts, and to understand the speech of others as a joint function of structural characteristics and social context”.

Canale & Swain (1980) provide the description of ‘communicative competence’ with a framework. They intend to determine the extent to which ‘communicative competence’ is grounded in theories of language, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and other language-related disciplines. Then they also provide a review of communicative approaches and the distinction between the notions of communicative competence and communicative performance, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the various theories of communicative competence, and at last propose a theoretical framework for communicative competence. They point out that the theoretical analysis is very important in establishing a clear statement of the content and boundaries of communicative competence which will lead to more useful and effective second language teaching, and allow more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills. Zhuang (2007) also tries to demonstrate a developmental procedure and a framework of communicative competence. He explores the three aspects of communicative competence and their teaching and tests the application of Bachman’s (1990) recent version. They are organizational, pragmatic and strategic competence. He claims that CLT is an effective way to achieve communicative competence, but other factors may take effects, for example, size of class, fair opportunities to communicate in class, proper percentage of error-correction, specific cultural context and availability of authentic materials.

As the term “communicative competence” has become known in recent years, the term “communicative” has become the most important word in language teaching and learning. A lot of studies are about developing the communicative competence; the issue of communicative language teaching are discussed and widely used in language teaching all over the world and at the same time a number of research studies in CLT have been conducted.

To develop students’ communicative abilities is one of the most important goals of English language study today. To achieve this goal, communicative language teaching (CLT) method naturally needs to be applied, using many tasks in the teaching process to promote communication.

2.6 Oral communicative ability (oral communicative competence)

CLT includes both processes and goals in classroom learning. It requires using communicative method as a means to achieve the goal that requires students to have the ability to communicate. One of the central theoretical concepts in communicative language teaching is “oral communication”.

The term “oral communication” has been defined by many linguists. Byrne (1986, p. 8) defines it as “a two-way process between speaker and listener (or listeners) and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding)”. In other words, it consists of both listening and speaking. He also points out the nature of oral communication that speech often includes incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical utterances, frequent false and repetitions. Speaking and listening are closely related and affect each other. Listening is the basic of speaking; one needs to listen in order to respond. Real listening is an active process including hearing, understanding and judging. Speaking can take place based on the information obtained in the listening process to achieve the communication aims. Oral communication in this study is described as a listening and speaking process in order to achieve the purpose of communication.

Oral communication including both speaking and listening is the foundation of language skills. However, even when the learners are very competent in grammar, they may not be able to communicate. This is especially the case of Chinese students’

oral communicative abilities that are not reflected in their proficiency test results. They usually do well in the test but cannot communicate in the real world. The in-equivalence of competence and performance may be the result of many factors. Chen (2009) and Ni (2007) point out that Chinese students still study in a passive habit of memorizing and doing grammar practice rather than rehearsing the real world communication. They think that it is hard for the Chinese students to improve their oral ability in the traditional education system. Similarly, Fan (2009) also indicates that among the four language skills of English learners in China, speaking skill is the weakest, and cannot match the requirements of a learner in communicating in this globalized world.

2.7 Communicative language teaching (CLT)

There are many different teaching methods, and nowadays, the most widely used method is communicative language teaching (CLT). According to Richards & Schmidt (2002: 90), the major principles of CLT are provided as follows:

- “learners learn a language through using it to communicate;
- authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities;
- fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning;
- communication involves the integration of different language skills;
- learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.”

Although most teachers claim to practice communicative language teaching (CLT), many do not genuinely apply CLT in real teaching and they just teach as they have done before because of many reasons (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). In order to teach effectively with this method, the best way to start is probably to select a communicative coursebook which includes communicative tasks, and then use CLT to present the coursebook.

2.8 Communicative task

2.8.1 What is a communicative task?

Before talking about the communicative task, the definition of 'task' should be clear. Richards, Platt & Weber (1985, p. 289) define the task as 'an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response)'. The examples they provide are drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and giving a command. They also point out that 'tasks may or may not involve the production of language' and applying a number of different kinds of task in language teaching makes class communicative. Crookes (1986) describes a task as a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research. Breen (1987, p. 26) defines task as 'a range of work plans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning--from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision making'. Prabhu (1987, p. 24) gives the definition of task as "an activity which required learners to arrive at the outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process". Lee (2000) also defines task as a classroom activity or exercise that has an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants, a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and a focus on meaning exchange, and as a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans. Similarly, Bygate, Skethan and Swain (2001) describe task as an activity which requires learners to use language with emphasis on meaning to attain an objective. Nunan (1989, p. 10) defines a communicative task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also has a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right". Estaire and Zanon (1994, p. 13-20) also define a communicative task as "a piece of classroom work which, as far as possible, resembles activities which

our students or other people carry out in everyday life, thus reproducing processes of everyday communication”.

Under the definitions of task, it can be concluded that communicative task, or communicative activity, is an activity or action which focuses on language communication rather than language structures and is carried out in order to process and understand the meaning in the target language to achieve the goal of communication. Nunan (1989) points out that a communicative task can be a real-world and pedagogic task, and should be employed in lessons and service for teaching and learning effectively. Furthermore, it is suggested that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

2.8.2 Roles of communicative task

As mentioned above, English teaching and learning starts at goals and objectives, and then progresses to choosing suitable coursebooks which consist of tasks through which the goals and objectives can be achieved. To achieve the communicative objectives, the tasks used are required to be communicative to make the teaching process easy. Communicative tasks are the effective tools used to develop students' communicative competence.

Some researchers (Breen, 1987; Long, 1985; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987) suggest that tasks can be used in teaching and learning. The task-based instruction also claims the using of tasks in teaching and learning. These claims are based on the theories of language learning and acquisition. Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993), cited in Norris et al., (1998: 31), point out that “the best way to learn and teach a language is through interaction.” The tasks provide learners a purpose to use the grammar in a meaningful context. Jacobs and Navas (2004) summarize the use of task-based teaching to promote language learning as follows:

- (1) providing learners with opportunities to make the language input they receive more comprehensible,

- (2) furnishing contexts in which learners need to produce output which others can understand, and
- (3) making the classroom closer to real-life language situations.

Task-based learning and teaching are based on communicative language teaching and refer to learning for meaningful communication. The aim of them is to develop students' integrated skills and communicative abilities through providing opportunities to learn and use real life language by authentic and practical use of language with communicative tasks.

Nunan (1991) points out that communicative tasks have evolved as an important component within curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation over the last 25 years. He also provides a figure to explain the integrated approach to develop a communicative curriculum as shown in figure 2.1.

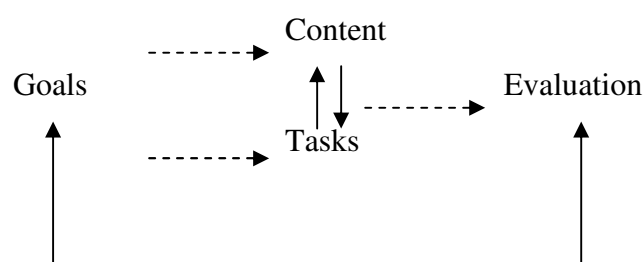


Figure 2.1 An integrated approach to curriculum development

Source: Nunan (1988: 22)

This figure shows that communicative task reflects the goal and content and affects the content. Then it takes an effect on evaluation together with the content. Therefore, communicative tasks play an important role in building up a communicative curriculum. Quite unlike Prabhu's (1987) task, 'task' in Nunan's perspective can be a task that introduces the language, offers opportunities to practice the language and consolidate the language learned. In short, it can be in any stage of teaching to provide opportunities for students to communicate.

2.8.3 Criteria in analyzing communicative task

Communicative tasks are needed for teaching and learning, but how do we know whether a task is a communicative task or not?

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) have provided three different types of materials evaluation, pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation. The pre-use evaluation is usually used to choose coursebook to use in teaching and learning. The in-use evaluation is to evaluate the materials while being used. The post-use evaluation can be used to evaluate the used materials.

There are many criteria for the pre-use evaluation of coursebooks. Cunningsworth (1984, p. 5-6) provides some principles for materials evaluation. The first principle is to 'relate the teaching materials to your aims and objectives'; the second one is to 'be aware of what language is for and select teaching materials which will help equip your students to use language effectively for their own purposes'; the third is to 'keep your students' learning needs in mind'; the fourth is to 'consider the relationship between language, the learning process and the learner'. These are very broad criteria for choosing materials.

Breen and Candlin (in Sheldon, et al., 1987: 27) discuss learners' criteria for good materials on the procedures for working with tasks and activities in the classroom with many questions as follow:

- '- What do you find are the most useful ways to learn a new language?
- What are the best kinds of language learning tasks and activities? What are the reasons for your choice?
- What can a teacher do which would help you most when you are learning a new language?
- What can other learners in the class do which would help you most when you are learning a new language?
- What's your favourite kind of language lesson?
- What are the reasons for your choice?'

The questions are not all listed. Cunningsworth's evaluation criteria are some

broad principles from teachers' aspect, while Breen and Candlin's criteria are in details from learners' aspect. These two criteria are pre-use evaluation which are suitable for choosing materials and cannot reflect the communicative level of a coursebook. A coursebook consists of lots of tasks for teaching and learning. Whether tasks are communicative or not may affect the class activities and learning effects. Communicative tasks can help teacher teach and develop students' communicative abilities effectively. So it is necessary to evaluate tasks included in a coursebook to check its communicative level.

Shavelson and Stern (1981) suggest that task evaluation should include content, materials, activities, goals, students and social community, while Wright (1987) provides a criterion including two elements: input data and an initiating question. Breen and Candlin (1987) also propose a framework consisting of input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback.

Ellis (1990) also provides six criteria for evaluating communicative tasks. First, communicative tasks should include communicative purpose. Second, there should be communicative desire of real world. Third, it should focus on content, not form. This means the task is exchanging information, not pattern practice. Fourth, communicative tasks should include a variety of language which speakers can improvise or create freely. Fifth, communicative tasks are done by students and require no teacher intervention. There is no need to correct or evaluate how students do the tasks. The assessment is based on the 'product' or on communicative purposes rather than on the language. At last, there is no material control in communicative tasks.

A framework for analyzing communicative tasks by Nunan (1989: 18) is provided in Figure 2.2 below. He proposes that a language learning task consists of six components: goals, input, activities, teacher role, learner role and settings. A communicative task has some characteristics in each of these six components as follows.

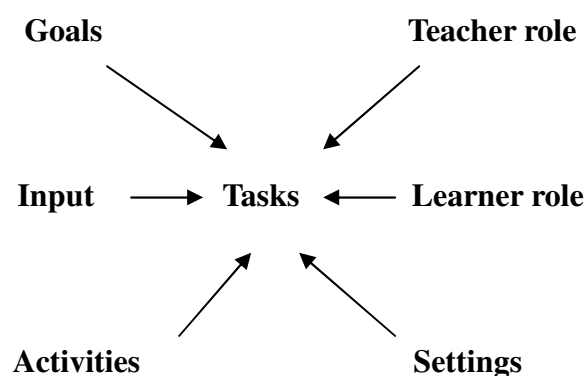


Figure 2.2 A framework for analyzing communicative tasks

Source: Nunan (1988: 18)

Goals: refers to the purposes of a language task, including establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, and through this to exchange information, ideas, opinions, attitudes and feelings, and to get things done; acquiring information from more or less ‘public’ sources in the target language (e.g. books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, documents, signs, notices, films, television, slides, tape, radio, public announcements, lectures or written report etc.) and using this information in some way like listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language (e.g. stories, poems, songs, rhymes, drama) and, for certain learners, creating them themselves.

Input: refers to "the data that form the point of departure for the task" (Nunan, 1989: 53): being authentic, which means that material is the rehearsal for the real world and has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching.

Activities: means what learners are expected to do with the input for the task, being authentic in terms of reflecting real-world tasks, stimulating situations for learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication and being designed to help develop the accuracy and fluency of learners' target language, They could be fully authentic (skill-using) or semi-authentic (skill-getting).

Learner roles: Learners are seen as members of a community progressively moving from dependent to independent learners.

Teacher roles: Teacher works as facilitator, participant, and observer.

Settings: the learning mode (e.g. task for whole class, small group, or pair

work), and the learning environment (e.g. conventional classroom, community class, or outside the classroom) of a task. The learning mode and the environment should promote learner-centeredness, meaning learners are involved in learning through doing tasks and using the language.

As communicative task is an important tool to cultivate students' communicative ability, Nunan's framework was chosen in this study to evaluate the tasks included in the coursebooks. In English teaching, English teachers should have the basic ideas about communicative tasks and how to design effective communicative tasks for the teaching units and implement them in class scientifically for the best teaching effect. In China, many teaching materials for the students are home-made. So the tasks need to be evaluated to provide some suggestions for teachers. Nunan's criteria were chosen because of the fit to this study to find the communicative levels of the coursebooks.

2.9 Related studies

2.9.1 Coursebook evaluation

As coursebooks play an important role in language teaching and learning, many studies were carried out on coursebooks evaluation to find out the characteristics of the coursebooks used from different aspects using different criteria.

Litz (2005) carried out a case study in coursebook evaluation and ELT management in South Korea based on a lot of debates throughout the ELT profession on the actual role of materials in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language (TESL/TEFL). In the paper, the evaluation process was taken at Sung Kyun Kwan University in Suwon, South Korea in 2000-2001 for a textbook (English Firsthand) that was being used in this particular learning environment. It was in order to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the book for this specific language program. Two instruments were used in this study, a questionnaire and a student needs analysis. Firstly, a series of textbook evaluation questionnaires were provided to all the eight English instructors and five hundred students. The questions included practical considerations (price, accessories, methodology etc.), layout and

design, range and balance of activities, skills appropriateness and integration, social and cultural considerations, subject content, and language types represented in the textbook. Secondly, a student needs analysis was conducted which included classroom demographics, students' aims, concerns, interests, expectations, and views on teaching methodology that would assist in the textbook. The results reveal that this coursebook can neither be whole-heartedly recommended nor unreservedly utilized in this particular teaching and learning situation. Nevertheless, it still can be an effective coursebook in the hands of a good teacher and instructors should not be discouraged from using it with an appropriate learner audience.

Additionally, Rubio, Passey, & Campbell (2004) conducted a study to analyze the treatment of grammar in current foreign language textbooks in order to find out whether textbooks that claim to adhere to the tenets of CLT really do so. They looked at eight introductory foreign language textbooks, four in Spanish and four in German, commonly used in the United States at the university level, and analyzed the activities included in them. They looked at whether the activity focused on input or output, and whether it represented communicative language practice, or it was simply a drill. Drills were further subdivided into mechanical, meaningful and communicative. Results indicate that the primary focus of language instruction is still on output and that some kinds of drills/practices still have a presence in the beginner-level classroom.

Similarly, Alamri (2008) carried out a research to evaluate the quality of the sixth grade English language textbook for Saudi boys' schools which was introduced at the elementary stage by the Ministry of Education in 2004. The subjects were 93 English language teachers and 11 supervisors in Riyadh Educational Zone. A survey questionnaire was used as a instrument which included 64 items grouped under 12 main categories: general appearance, design and illustration, accompanying materials, objectives, topic appropriateness, learning components, social-cultural contexts, skills development, teach ability, flexibility, teaching methods, and practice and testing. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. A per-item analysis, a per-category analysis, and an independent sample t-test were conducted. The results showed that 48 items elicited very positive responses out of the 64 items in the questionnaire. This speaks well of the textbook. On the other hand, 13 items out of 64 items had the

lowest means with less than 2.50. This reveals that there are some weak points in the textbook. It was also found that learning components were the strength, while the weakness lied in teaching methods. The findings also reveal that there are no significant differences between the means of the two populations of the study (teachers and supervisors) except on the flexibility of the coursebook. This may result from the different nature of their jobs. The study also provides some recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the coursebook, such as adding an appropriate glossary at the end of the textbook, including a variety of attractive illustrations, replacing the listening material with a better one and so on.

Additionally, Lawrence (2011) conducted a research on textbook evaluation for the Hong Kong new secondary school (NSS) curriculum. This study was conducted with two purposes. The first one was to provide a detailed systematic framework in evaluating curriculum fitness. The second one was to enrich the post-use evaluation empirical studies. It intended to find whether the newly written New Senior Secondary textbooks helped teachers deliver the new curriculum objectives. The target textbook under evaluation was “Theme Book” of the NSS ELECT series published by Pearson Longman. The ELECT series is a collection of textbooks designed for the NSS curriculum. The data were collected from book evaluation and an interview. The framework for textbook evaluation was a checklist adapted to measure the fit to the local curriculum needs. The framework was firstly tested by some local teachers within the Hong Kong ELT environment and was found to be an effective tool in determining the fitness with the new curriculum. The findings showed that the strengths of the textbook included being user friendly and well resourced, encouraging the use of the task-based approach in teaching and learning, promoting independent and creative language learning, a good selection of authentic texts of different topics and genre, a good balance between language arts and non-language arts materials, well designed integrated skills and reading tasks, and use of technology facilitating language learning. The weaknesses found lied in the lack of language input in speaking, reading and writing skills, lack of orientation towards public-examination requirements, and surface level pedagogical coverage. Some recommendations were provided on the textbook, the design of tasks, text selection and the curriculum in this study. On the textbook, more language input,

guidance and exam oriented language practices were needed. On the design of tasks, the textbook should provide more coverage on individual learning differences. The guidance for reading tasks was adequate, while guidance on other three skills was lacking. The tasks were also found to tend to introduce new items and concepts too often. Task activities should allow more recycling of previous knowledge and skills. A majority of the activities were individual work, so more pair work activities were needed. For writing tasks, relevant activities for students were needed to cultivate students' abilities. On text selection, the range and length of the listening texts should be improved, and the reading text selection should include more poems and songs in different styles and topics. On the curriculum, the contents should be expressed more clearly and understandably.

The studies above show a picture of coursebook evaluation in different aspects with different instruments. Although the coursebook evaluation criteria in the studies above are different from the instruments used in this study, the procedures and results provide many suggestions for this study.

2.9.2 NCEE

As the NCEE is very important in English teaching and learning in China and plays an important role in students' life, many researches were conducted on it.

Ding (2002) conducted a study about the analysis on quality-oriented education and reformation on the University Entrance Examination System. Because it was necessary to carry out quality-oriented education to cope with the development of the modern society, the reformation in the current university entrance examination system was called for. He first discussed the misunderstanding of the functions of the university entrance examination system, the unsuitability of the subjects, the problem of the examination, the way the examination affecting the language teaching and learning and many more. Then he deeply investigated the contradiction between quality-oriented education and the reformation of the university entrance examination. At last, the suggestions for the reformation of the university entrance examination system were made. The idea is based on three benefits: content, test form and grading. The emphasis of reform is content. The use of one examination

as entrance examination and national college entrance examination together, and revising the rules and system in admission involving the students who do not take the examination are suggested. The last aspect is grading realizing matriculations by computer when it is necessary.

Moreover, Xu (2004) investigated the backwash effects of NCEE on senior high school teaching and learning in China. A detailed analysis of NCEE was conducted to spot the positive changes throughout its development and the present challenges it faces. At the same time, she carried out a survey among high school English teachers and students, using questionnaires, interviews and class observation, in the hope that she might be able to find out how NCEE has affected English teaching and learning in high schools and whether it had positive or negative influence. The results showed that the test format and the NCEE itself affected the class activities, teaching methodology, time arrangement and exercises categories in English teaching and learning. Most of the teachers and students regarded the NCEE as their directions and focus in teaching and learning. At last, she suggests that reformation is needed in English teaching and learning in senior high school in China.

Furthermore, Ma (2005) carried out a research about the structure and showed the current problem and reflection that China's NCEE system faced. He contends that the China's national college entrance examination is a complicated and systematic project, not a perfect tool to improve the national quality and cultivate qualified personell in all fields. Thus it was always a topic of general interest in schools, families and even in the whole society. Since the entrance examination was restored in 1977, many reforms had been made to enable it to choose or cultivate talented people and conduct the development of China. In face of the world's rapid development in science and the severe international competition, the entrance examination has become the most important way of choosing or cultivating talents and needs to be improved with the development of education. The research was intended to find out the key to the main problems in the present examination system and give some reformative suggestions. It is suggested that more suitable and reasonable ways to choose or cultivate creative talents can be established in China, when more and more attention is on the reform of the entrance examination.

In the study, the author analyzed problems in the existing system as follows:

(1) The existing system had negative effect on the fundamental education in primary and middle schools. (2) Advanced education also suffered from the present entrance examination system. (3) The present examination system brought forth great dissatisfaction among the public. The author gave the main reasons for the problems and many reformative suggestions after canalizing the present situation in China as follows: (1) Put an end once and for all to change the examination guidance of advance quality education. (2) Strengthen the virtuous joint between secondary education and higher education, and reduce education focusing on well-performing students. (3) Education sectors should prevent secondary education from unfair distribution and vicious competition. (4) The NCEE system should be reformed. Pluralistic and compound enrollment system should be explored. Although NCEE reform was very important, the effective implement of NCEE reform smoothly was also important. The revision of the enrollment system could be considered to include more ways besides NCEE. At the same time, the enrollment system of NCEE could be improved to seal all enrollment loop holes. A much more impartial and better enrollment environment can be structured and optimized to select and train talented persons with individual character.

Additionally, Lu (2009) conducted an investigation of the backwash effect of NCEE on the English teaching and learning at senior high schools in China. This study was based on the new Regular Senior English Curriculum Standard set by the Ministry of Education in 2003. The purpose of this study was to investigate the backwash effects of NCEE in the context of the new curriculum standard, combining China's senior high school English teaching with learning practice. It also aimed to find out the ways of exerting positive backwash effects of NCEE, in the hope of providing useful references for the promotion of senior English teaching and for the advancement of testing innovation. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research instruments were questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews. All the data were collected from 133 teachers, 476 students and 8 English inspectors. The results of the study showed that the NCEE has great backwash effects on senior high schools English teaching and learning, especially on that of Senior III. The positive and negative backwash effects were found. Based on the findings of this study, some suggestions were put forward, for

example, further innovating the NCEE test design to take in more productive skills like spoken test and translation; changing the single means of the NCEE selecting students for universities by increasing the ways to enter colleges in China and further training the teachers to be more competent in English.

2.9.3 Oral communicative ability

One of the goals of language teaching and learning is oral communicative competence, so many research studies were carried out to find out students' real oral communicative ability, methods to develop it and factors affecting it to provide beneficial suggestions for language teaching and learning.

Chen, Fan, and Lin (1996) conducted a research on the crucial role of oral communication in language teaching in Taiwan. Based on the significance of teaching the use of focus in English oral communication and the discussion of the reasons why many Chinese students failed to show focus in their English speech, this research provided some ways and activities to develop students' communicative abilities. The activities were grouped into two stages. In the first stage, the practice in relating focus to meaning in communication was provided to students with more controlled and listening discrimination activities. The activities were presented in three steps: (1) getting familiar with the physical features of focus in English, (2) building the awareness of the relationship between focus and meaning, and (3) producing focus appropriate to the intended meaning. The second stage provided opportunities for students to perform communicative functions through the use of focus with more free and real conversation activities. The activities were grouped into four functions: showing disagreement, correcting wrong information, calling attention to new information and making an argument. The activities given intended to familiarize students with focus on enhancing their sensitivity to the use of focus in oral communication.

On the other hand, Florez (1999) carried out a study on improving adult English language learners' speaking skill. After the review of the definitions of speaking and what a good speaker did, this study provided a general outline of a speaking lesson which consisted of preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and

extension. This study also provided some in-class speaking tasks for teachers. The tasks were presented in six categories according to Brown's (1994) description. They were imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal and extensive tasks. The tasks help learners improve their speaking and overall oral competence.

Moreover, Kurihara (2006) did a research study on how student attitudes changed in English oral communication class in a Japanese senior high school. Although the course for developing students' oral communicative abilities was put into practice in 2003, some students still ignored the recommendation by the Ministry to develop the oral communication skills. This study intended to investigate students' attitudes toward the English oral communication classroom with questionnaires, two main activities and interviews. The participants were a class of 38 girls in the second year of the academically-oriented senior high school. Three research questions were addressed: (1) How did student attitudes change in one high school English oral communication class, where students were reticent in the activities? (2) What hindered their spoken performance? (3) How could the teacher eliminate the restricting factors to encourage students to speak more in the classroom? The results showed that students expected improvement in their practical English speaking skills from the oral communication class. The students preferred whole class activities because of the fear of losing face and the peer support. The difficulty of material and peer relations in small group activities might be one factor affecting students' oral communicative abilities. Then this study provided some suggestions for teachers to carry out the oral communication class more effectively, such as using student-preferred activities, choosing proper material, and presenting a better learning environment in practicing speaking skills.

Additionally, Lam (2006) conducted a study in gauging the effects of ESL oral communication strategy teaching in a multi-method approach. The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of oral communication strategy teaching (OCST) on learners' performance and on strategy use. The subjects were two classes in the secondary ESL classroom in Hong Kong. The instruments used were group work discussions, self-report questionnaires, observations of learners' strategy use, and stimulated recall interviews. The experimental class received 16 hours of OCST. In weeks 1, 10 and 20, data were collected. The findings indicated that the experimental

class generally performed better than the control class. In addition, there was an evidence from the multi-method approach to support the view that young L2 learners tend to rely on ‘bedrock strategies’ in oral communication tasks. Finally, the distinct advantages of using a multi-method approach to encourage the effects of OCST are appraised in ‘task effectiveness’ in terms of students’ general effectiveness and confidence in completing the tasks.

Moreover, Fan (2009) carried out a research on the problems and strategies for Chinese English major students’ oral skills development. He pointed out that among the four kinds of language skills of Chinese learners of English, oral skills were found to be the weakest, and this cannot match the demands of the increasingly growing intercultural communication. In this paper, based on a survey of a group of Chinese students and the observation of the students’ English learning, the main problems Chinese English major students faced in developing their oral skills were found and some suggestions were provided to solve the problems. It was found that lack of confidence and lack of practice were two major problems causing their poor oral abilities. The author provided some practical classroom strategies with a holistic approach in dealing with the problems. They included lowering students’ “affective filter” to build up their confidence, creating language atmosphere and providing opportunities for practice, integrating oral practice with other aspects of TEFL and utilizing the positive testing effect. Those strategies can effectively help students to improve their oral communicative abilities.

Furthermore, Meng (2009) conducted a study in improving Chinese students’ oral communicative abilities by encouraging students in large classes to speak in group work in Xuchang University. In many Chinese universities and colleges, because of many reasons, large-class English teaching was a common trend. This has led to a strange and serious phenomenon that most students cannot communicate in English. This study provided some useful speaking activities of group work to encourage Chinese students to promote their oral communicative abilities. The activities were the superior-inferior arrangement, the combining arrangement, the co-operating arrangement and the individual arrangement. Matching the difficulty of speaking tasks with the learners’ proficiency, and creating conditions for speaking to occur in group work are also suggested. It is also necessary to reform the current

instruction model in College English classes.

The studies above are about oral communicative abilities. Some research studies provide ways and activities to improve students' oral communicative abilities and some studies promote the factors affecting students' oral communicative abilities.

2.9.4 Communicative language teaching

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach in language teaching involving whole person, culture, educational, developmental communicative processes. It encourages social process of growth from child-like dependence to self-direction and independence. The teaching goals of CLT is that students can use the target language communicatively, learn about their own learning, take increasing responsibility for it, and learn from one another. Objectives are accomplished in a non-defensive manner.

Breen & Candlin (2002) investigated the essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. Their paper was offered as a set of proposals in an effort to define the nature of communicative language teaching in the context of the recognized needs of teaching language for adequate attention to language use and language form. Almost all the teaching curriculums were designed in answering three interrelated questions: What is to be learned? How is the learning to be undertaken and achieved? To what extent is the former appropriate and the latter effective? A communicative curriculum placed language teaching within CLT. This paper represented the potential characteristics of communicative language teaching in terms of a communicative curriculum framework. It also proposed a set of principles on which particular curriculum designs could be based for implementation in particular situations and circumstances. In the discussion of purposes of language teaching and the potential methodology of a communicative curriculum, these were found: (1) communication as a general purpose, (2) the underlying demands on the learner that such a purpose may imply, (3) the initial contributions which learners may bring to the curriculum, (4) the process of teaching and learning, (5) the roles of teacher and learners, (6) the role of content within the teaching and learning. Lastly, the place of evaluation of learner progress and evaluation of the curriculum itself from a

communicative point of view were discussed.

Similarly, Sun & Cheng (2002) carried out a study named “From context to curriculum: a case study of communicative language teaching in China”. This article discusses the implementation of communicative language teaching methodology in the EFL context in one institution in China. It is a case study at Private Pui Ching Commercial College (PPCCC) in the city of Guangzhou. The context and curriculum development of the English teaching program were investigated. The study suggests that a preliminary stage of context-based communicative curriculum development is necessary. Such a preliminary stage aimed to investigate first the context of an English language teaching program, and then the process of adapting the program to its context for implementation. A framework for such context investigation is proposed in six aspects of a language program including educational policy, educational tradition, language setting, teaching materials, instructors and learners. Three key fundamental questions regarding the integration of the context study into curriculum design are also discussed in the teaching methodology, teaching objectives and teaching activities. They are as follows. (1) How communicative can a program be in the given EFL context in China, such as the one at PPCCC? (2) What objectives can be realistically achieved for such a program in an EFL context? (3) What would the teaching activities look like in this context at PPCCC? Lots of suggestions were provided in these three aspects.

Additionally, Cai (2009) conducted a study in order to identify how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) improve the speaking ability of Chinese non-English major students. The research was conducted in and through the Memorial Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Karrmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, over thirty days. The study started from a brief review of literature on the history of the CLT, and then a review of literature related to research studies of the current teaching situation for non-English major students in China. And through the review of the theories, it becomes the evident that CLT can improve the speaking ability of non-English major students through communicating with others. He points out that it is particularly necessary that we pay more attention to the communicative aspect of language and try the communicative approach in the teaching of English in China.

2.9.5 Communicative task

As communicative tasks are a necessary tool to achieve the goal of communication in language teaching and learning used in communicative language teaching, many researchers have investigated communicative tasks from different aspects.

Walker (1994) conducted a research on the effect of the communicative tasks using communicative strategies under the background that effective problem solving among multiple agents requires a better understanding of the role of communication in collaboration. In this paper, it showed that training in communicative strategies might be effective ways to improve the students' performance, but that these strategies were affected by other factors, such as task requirements, situation parameters and agents' resource limitations. The argument was based on two sources of evidence: (1) an analysis of a corpus of 55 problem solving dialogues, and (2) experimental simulations of collaborative problem solving dialogues in an experimental world, Design-World, where task requirements, agents' resources and communicative strategies were parameterized. This study reflects the important role that communicative task plays in evaluating communicative strategies.

On the other hand, Knutson (1997) carried out a research in communicative reading tasks for foreign language classroom. Recent reading research had shown that reading comprehension was based on both text and reader, so this paper focuses on the purpose of reader-based factor, beginning with a review of research which demonstrates that reading texts with a particular purpose or perspective facilitates comprehension and increases reader interest. The paper suggests approaches to the teaching of texts that provide learners with a purpose, including student-generated text collections, communicative tasks with reading components, and pre-reading tasks for readings in literature or civilization. Finally, the paper claims that the concept of purpose provided a useful organizing principle for the coordination of reading instruction across the foreign language curriculum.

Furthermore, McDonough & Mackey (2000) conducted an empirical study in Thailand on communicative tasks, conversational interaction and linguistic form.

They based their study on the suggestions of second language acquisition (SLA) research that some of the processes that occurred during conversational interaction might facilitate second language learning. Carrying out communicative task designed to promote these processes could provide learners with the opportunity to focus on linguistic form in the context of meaning. Much of the SLA research on conversational interaction and communicative tasks has been carried out with the more commonly taught languages, such as English or Spanish. So, they described a series of communicative tasks designed for use by Thai learners studying English as a second or foreign language and reported on a study that tested the tasks' effectiveness at providing opportunities for learners to focus on linguistic form during conversational interaction. Finally, practical issues in the implementation of tasks in L2 classroom and research contexts were discussed. The results of their study suggest that communicative tasks can be designed to promote conversational interaction involving specific linguistic forms. Such task-based materials provide learners with the opportunity to focus on particular linguistic structures while involved in meaning based communication. Careful task design can increase the likelihood that learners would negotiate and recast linguistic forms.

Rao (2001) conducted a research to examine Chinese students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classroom. Thirty Chinese university students (15 2nd year and 15 3rd year students) majoring in English in Jiangxi Normal University took part in this study. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were employed. The results suggest that Chinese students favored a variety of classroom activities, but that they like non-communicative activities more than communicative ones. It was also found that the students' perceived difficulties caused by CLT had their source in the differences between the underlying educational theories of China and those of Western countries. The results suggest that the reformation of English teaching in China is needed.

Additionally, Chen, Cristea & Okamoto (2003) carried out a study in communicative task modeling and its practice on academic English learning in a web-based environment. This research presented a web-based course for scholarly communicative language competence development via a distance tutoring system. The focus of this paper is on the description of the representation and organization of

communicative task representing the subject matter knowledge (academic English for non-natives) in terms of communicative-goal, input for achieving this goal and activity derived from this input. Moreover, the relationships among the three knowledge structures are represented as the curriculum knowledge describing the goal structure of each lesson, the different ways (views) to organize the lessons and the order in which lesson elements should be presented. Furthermore, an education-oriented communication mechanism is developed to introduce an adaptable web-course with focus on communication and communication control. Finally, an experiment was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer and knowledge related communications between a web-course and the student-users. The experimental findings confirms that multivariable interactivity values, expressed by pedagogical and structural preference, affect learning outcomes and effectiveness of student-users' language learning experiences. The system can provide different organizations to teach a student the same language expressions, functions and contents in different ways for different situations.

This study suggested that while these technological innovations foster changes in SLA, facilitates computer-mediated learning activities and encourages the student-user's autonomy, they were ultimately tools in the hands of course authors who must use them creatively to maximize the students' language learning experience and to enhance their language competence acquisitions for communication purposes. Although learning language through communication has been proved successful in face-to-face language learning situations for facilitating the restructuring of the student-users' evolving linguistic system, with the development of society. The web is widely used by students, the web can be used as a useful tool in teaching and learning communicative tasks, even if it has not yet been fully successfully transferred to the new educational environment.

Similarly, Wang (2006) conducted a study in designing communicative tasks for college English courses in China. Communicative tasks had been proved to be effective in promoting the learners' competence in using the language to do things they needed to do and communicative tasks design offers a change from the traditional teaching routines through which many learners have previously failed to communicate. It encourages learners to experiment with whatever English pieces they

can recall, to try things out without fear of failure, and to express themselves with basic fluency and accuracy. Since the teaching materials for the students in China designed focusing on grammar more than on communication, teachers should carefully design effective communicative tasks for the teaching units and implement them in class scientifically for the best teaching effect. Teachers of English should know the basic ideas about communicative tasks and task design, about how to design the components of the communicative tasks, and how to conduct activities when implementing them. This study provided some ideas of how to design communicative tasks in non-English major classrooms in order to achieve better teaching effects: what principles of communicative tasks should be based on, what components should be in the communicative tasks, what the main problems of non-English major freshman in English classrooms are, how to design the traditional materials to fit TBLT, what activities should be done in the classroom, and whether the communicative tasks are effective.

Incecay and Incecay (2009) conducted a case study that investigates 30 Turkish university students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classroom in order to better understand the appropriateness and effectiveness of communicative and non-communicative activities in their English as a foreign language (EFL) courses in a private university preparatory school in Istanbul, Turkey. Using multi-method, data were collected by means of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Quantitative data were supported by qualitative data to provide more reliable results. The results suggested that EFL countries like Turkey needed to modernize and update their teaching methods which meant making changes by taking students' previous educational habits into consideration. It was obvious from the study that students in non-English speaking countries made use of communicative language teaching (CLT) if communicative activities and non-communicative activities were combined in English classrooms. In other words, applying the communicative approach with traditional teaching structures was beneficial for EFL students.

Furthermore, Sung (2010) conducted a study in promoting communicative language learning through communicative tasks. This study examined the level of effectiveness and suitability of three communicative language teaching-based projects

in a particular teaching context, namely, a first-year Chinese language classroom in a university in Utah. Research data collected included participants' sample project work, project feedback forms, and focus-group interviews. The results show that the participants speak highly about the projects, and they also provide some suggestions for project modifications in order to better fit their individual learning needs. The findings suggest that, when designing communicative language teaching-based projects, learning about students' needs and adapting communicative tasks to a particular teaching context are the keys to ensure project success.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design for this study, including coursebooks, research subjects, research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Coursebooks

In China, there are two categories of the English teaching materials, commercial coursebooks and home-made coursebooks. The commercial coursebooks are written by English native speakers and used by many training institutes, while the home-made coursebooks are written by Chinese authors and used in most of the schools all over the country. There are two main sets of local coursebooks widely used at many senior high schools all over the country. These two sets of coursebook are all home-made and edited according to the course objectives by some experts under the organization of Ministry of Education in China.

The set of coursebooks, *Senior English for China (Student's Book 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B and 3) (2007)*, were analyzed to check and to find out their communicative levels. This set of coursebooks was published by *People's Education Press* and widely used by many senior high school students all over the country. *Senior English for China, Students' Book 1A and 1B* are used for the first year high school students; *Students' Book 2A and 2B* are used for the second year high school students; *Students' Book 3* is for third year high school students. They include teacher's books, students' books and CD-ROM. Each coursebook includes two main parts, text and exercises.

This version of this set of coursebooks is very new. They have been improved a lot to be more communicative compared to the old versions. They were edited by many Chinese experts under the direction of the Ministry of Education which set the objectives and knowledge outline. This set of coursebooks was written according to the combination of analytical and synthetic approaches. The content were organized

according to topics. Different parts of language were organized step by step then in the whole structure of language. However, the language content was consolidated by tasks, so students can practice language use to achieve the communicative purposes through providing opportunities for students to practice using the language learned. Therefore, the syllabus types of this set of coursebooks are the combination of structural and functional syllabus, and the structural syllabus dominates. The coursebooks consist of tasks which can be used by teachers in communicative language teaching to develop students' communicative abilities at all stages of teaching.

The set of coursebooks includes five students' books. Students' Book 1A consists of 12 units. Students' Book 1B, 2A and 2B have 10 units each. There are 16 units included in Students' Book 3. Therefore, there are totally 58 units in this set of coursebooks. The number of tasks in each unit are the same. There are 8 tasks in warming up, listening, speaking, pre-reading, reading, post-reading, language study and integrating skills in every unit in Students' Book 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B. But the structure in Book 3 is different. Some units include listening, talking, practicing, integrating skills, project and assessing, while the structure of the other units consists of listening, testing your skills, reading and speaking, reading, cloze test, translating and writing. Each unit in Book 3 consists of 8 tasks, too. So there are totally 464 tasks (58 units \times 8 tasks).

In the tasks, students are asked to use English to achieve some special outcomes in some particular contexts. For example, the warm up task in Figure 3.1 is an activity to ask students to use English to solve problems.

Another example in Figure 3.2 is a pre-reading task. In this part, students are asked to discuss four questions in English with their partners. This is a preparation for the reading part.

Figure 3.1 An example of warming up task

WARMING UP

How creative are you? Are you good at solving problems and thinking in new ways? Work together with your partner and solve these problems.


Useful things	Talk box	True or false?																
How many new uses can you think of for the following items? 1 A toothpick _____ _____ 2 A sock _____ _____ 3 A plastic bag _____ _____	How many words can you make by moving the sides of the box? You can move any side as many steps as you wish. <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>I</td><td>D</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>O</td><td>A</td><td>T</td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>T</td><td>O</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>R</td><td>E</td><td>M</td></tr> </table> Example: STOP SIDR COAT ATOE PREM	S	I	D	R	C	O	A	T	A	T	O	E	P	R	E	M	1 The word "boat" can be spelled using four of the letters from the word "automobile". 2 11 minutes past 5 o'clock is 48 minutes before 6 o'clock. 3 If you turn a left-handed glove inside out, it will fit on a right hand. 
S	I	D	R															
C	O	A	T															
A	T	O	E															
P	R	E	M															

Figure 3.2 An example of pre-reading task

PRE-READING

Discuss these questions with your partner.

- 1 What kind of music do you like?
- 2 When you listen to a song, do you listen to the words or the music?
- 3 Do you play any musical instrument? What is your favourite instrument?
- 4 Do you like to listen to music from other countries?

There are totally 58 units included in this set of coursebooks. Each unit is a particular context. In each context, different tasks are designed to develop students' reading, listening, speaking, writing and communicative abilities. The grammar points are included and practiced in each unit step by step. Each unit focuses on one or two grammar points only. The topics of each unit are shown in the table below.

Table 3.1 Units and topics in *Senior English for China, Students' Book*

Learner	Book	Unit	Topic	Unit	Topic
1 st year	1A	Unit 1	Good friends	Unit 2	English around the world
		Unit 3	Going places	Unit 4	Unforgettable experiences
		Unit 5	The silver screen	Unit 6	Good manners
		Unit 7	Cultural relics	Unit 8	Sports

Learner	Book	Unit	Topic	Unit	Topic
		Unit 9	Technology	Unit 10	The world around us
		Unit 11	The sounds of the world	Unit 12	Art and literature
	1B	Unit 13	Healthy eating	Unit 14	Festivals
		Unit 15	The necklace	Unit 16	Scientists at work
		Unit 17	Great women	Unit 18	New Zealand
		Unit 19	Modern agriculture	Unit 20	Humor
		Unit 21	Body language	Unit 22	A world of fun
2 nd year	2A	Unit 1	Making a difference	Unit 2	News media
		Unit 3	Art and architecture	Unit 4	The British Isles
		Unit 5	Living with disease	Unit 6	Life in the future
		Unit 7	A garden of poems	Unit 8	First aid
		Unit 9	Saving the earth	Unit 10	Frightening nature
	2B	Unit 11	Scientific achievements	Unit 12	Fact and fantasy
		Unit 13	The water planet	Unit 14	Freedom fighters
		Unit 15	Destinations	Unit 16	The United States of America
		Unit 17	Disabilities	Unit 18	Inventions
		Unit 19	The Merchant of Venice	Unit 20	Archaeology
3 rd year	3	Unit 1	That must be a record!	Unit 2	Crossing limits
		Unit 3	The land down under	Unit 4	Green world
		Unit 5	Getting the message	Unit 6	Going West
		Unit 7	A Christmas Carol	Unit 8	Learning a foreign language
		Unit 9	Health care	Unit 10	American literature
		Unit 11	Key to success	Unit 12	Education
		Unit 13	The mystery of the Moonstone	Unit 14	Zoology
		Unit 15	Popular youth culture	Unit 16	Finding jobs

The structure of each unit in book 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B is the same which consists of warming up, listening, speaking, pre-reading, reading, post-reading, language study, integrating skills. See examples of every part in Appendix E 1.

(1) Warming up: This part is the beginning part of the lesson which takes a short period of time for students to be quickly enrolled into classroom activities before the start of the main content of a lesson. A good warming up can play an important role in attracting students' attentions and interests and enrolling them into the classroom learning status.

The warming up part in this set of coursebooks includes some questions about students' attitudes or knowledge, some questions with reference to some pictures, discussion about the passage or pictures provided, listening to the tape and answering some questions, filling a table and so on.

(2) Listening: Most of the structures in the listening parts are listening and catching information. There are also some discussions after listening to the tape.

(3) Speaking: The speaking tasks are usually some discussions or question and answer practices in individual, pair or group.

(4) Pre-reading: There are always some simple questions related to the reading part provided for students to discuss or think.

(5) Reading: In this part, almost all of the reading parts are long passages.

(6) Post-reading: Most of the tasks in this part are answering questions or checking true or false using the information from the reading passages. Some tasks are completing tables with students' own thoughts related to the topics in the reading parts.

(7) Language study: Language study part consists of word study and some grammar exercises in multiple choices, gap filling, sentence rewriting, and so on.

(8) Integrating skills: It includes reading and writing. In this part, students are usually asked to read one short passage and then write another short passage related to it or in new topics.

The above details are the structure of Book 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B. However, Students' Book 3 is different from the other four books. The focus of Book 3 is grammar practicing. Some units in Book 3 include listening, talking, practicing, integrating skills, project and assessing. In these units, listening, talking, practicing

and integrating skills are emphasized. Practicing consists of many exercises in vocabulary and grammar in different forms. On the other hand, the structure of some units consists of listening, testing your skills, reading and speaking, reading, cloze test, translating and writing. The structure of book 3 looks like a test paper because there are lots of exercises in vocabulary and grammar included. Some examples are given in Appendix E 2.

3.2 Research subjects

The subjects were 59 students from one third year senior high school class at one senior high school in Henan Province in China. This is a school in the city and it is considered the best one. The population of the third year students in this school is 2245 in 36 classes of about 60 students each. All of them have learned English for six years and English is the main subject for them. One class (59 students) was randomly selected as the subjects of this study using the random sampling method.

3.3 Research instruments

Three research instruments used collect quantitative data in this study were task evaluation criteria, the China English proficiency test (National College Entrance Examination), and an oral communication test. Each instrument are introduced in details as follows.

3.3.1 Task Evaluation criteria

In order to investigate communicative levels of the coursebooks used in China, the task evaluation criteria (see Appendix A) were adopted from Nunan (1989)'s framework for analyzing communicative tasks. The items in the framework were divided into many sub-items in the checklist in a form to make it easier to check according to Nunan (1989). A communicative task must have at least one characteristic in each of the six components to be considered communicative.

Table 3.2 Task evaluation criteria

Aspects of Goals		Task 1	Task 2
1. Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships;			
2. Exchanging	2.1 information		
	2.2 ideas		
	2.3 opinions		
	2.4 attitudes		
	2.5 feelings		
	2.6 and to get things done through interactions;		
3. acquiring information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language e.g.	3.1 books,		
	3.2 magazines,		
	3.3 newspapers,		
	3.4 brochures,		
	3.5 documents,		
	3.6 signs,		
	3.7 notices,		
	3.8 films,		
	3.9 television,		
	3.10 slides,		
	3.11 tape,		
	3.12 radio,		
	3.13 public announcements,		
	3.14 lectures		
	3.15 written report etc.		
4. using this information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language in some way;			
5. listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language e.g.	5.1 stories,		
	5.2 poems,		
	5.3 songs,		
	5.4 rhymes,		
	5.5 drama		

Continued

6. for certain learners, creating them themselves.			
Sum of Goals			
Aspects of Input		Task 1	Task 2
1. Activity is the rehearsal for the real world			
2. Text is slightly adapted to suit the students, but still retain most of its authentic features.			
Sum of Input			
Aspects of Activities		Task 1	Task 2
1. being authentic in terms of	1.1 reflecting real-world tasks,		
	1.2 promoting learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication;		
2. designed to help develop	2.1 the accuracy of learners' target language including fully authentic (skill using) and semi-authentic (skill getting),		
	2.2 fluency of learners' target language.		
Sum of activities			
Aspects of Learner roles		Task 1	Task 2
1. The centre of class.			
2. Negotiative, be part of a social group.			
3. Move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses.			
Sum of learner roles			
Aspects of Teacher roles		Task 1	Task 2
1. Facilitator			
2. Participant			
3. Director			
Sum of teacher roles			

Continued

Aspects of settings	Task 1	Task 2
1. promote learner-centeredness, i.e. learners are involved in learning through doing or using the language learned;		
2. provide learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real-life purpose to them.		
Sum of settings		
Total		

3.3.2 NCEE

The national college entrance examination is a very important proficiency test. It is organized every June. The test paper was constructed by the committee of NCEE according to the objectives and knowledge outline of the English course at senior high school in China set by the Ministry of Education. This English test paper consists of three main integrated skills: listening, reading and writing. It consists of listening (20 multiple choice items), grammar and vocabulary (15 multiple choice items), cloze test (20 multiple choice items), reading comprehension (20 multiple choice items), error identification and correction (a passage including 10 errors) and essay writing (about 100 words) (see appendix F). The test takes two hours and the total score is 150 points. The passing point of the test is 90 (60%).

3.3.3 Oral communication test

In order to examine students' oral communicative ability, two tests were used. The first was a listening and responding test and the second was a speaking test. The test format of the two tests were adapted from the IELTS speaking test.

3.3.3.1 Listening and responding test

In the listening and responding test, a text of a hotel advertisement (see

Appendix C) was adapted from a guide book, named 'A guide book for Hainan'. It was a short passage about the attracting characteristics of the hotel at Sanya City in China. The text chosen was not difficult for students because there were only three new words. The sentence structure and grammar points were familiar to them because they all had learned the structures. The text was read by a native English speaker and recorded as the listening materials. Students were asked to listen to the text twice and respond to it (see Appendix B). First, the students commented on the place that was introduced in the text (e.g. setting, attraction and price), and then said whether they wanted to visit the place or not, and why. Students could take notes to help them to catch information when they listened to the text. After listening, students were given one minute to think about what they were going to say. Then they were asked to talk about the topic for one or two minutes.

3.3.3.2 Speaking test

The speaking test (see Appendix B) was taken from the IELTS speaking test. It was in the form of an interview. There were eight questions totally. Here each student were asked to discuss each question for about 1 minute. The test consisted of two parts. First, the interviewer asked the student about him/herself using 4 questions as follows:

- (1) What's your name and where do you come from?
- (2) How many people are there in your family and who are they?
- (3) What do you like doing?
- (4) Who is your best friend?

These first four questions asked for some general information about students themselves to make them relaxed and enroll themselves into the state of testing. They were easy, so the students felt comfortable to have contents to express.

Then, another four questions were asked about one familiar topic, clothes and fashion which is of their interest. Then students would have something to say about these topics.

- (1) How important are clothes and fashion to you? [Why/Why not?]
- (2) What kind of clothes do you dislike? [Why?]

(3) How different are the clothes you wear now from those you wore 10 years ago?

(4) What do you think the clothes we wear say about us?

3.4 Data collection

The oral communicative test paper was not piloted, but an English teacher checked the paper before it was conducted. The English teacher has taught the students for three years, and she knew the abilities of their students. She agreed that the paper matched her students' levels and there was no suggestion for improvement from her. The data were collected at the end of the course.

The quantitative data were collected according to the following steps. First, the oral communication test was conducted on 19th-20th, May 2011. Second, the students took the NCEE on 8th, June 2011. Then the coursebooks were analyzed from June to August, 2011. The schedule is provided in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 The schedule of the study

Steps	Date	Procedure
1	19 th -20 th , May 2011	The oral communication test was conducted.
2	8 th , June 2011	Students took the NCEE.
3	June to August, 2011	The coursebooks were analyzed.

3.4.1 Coursebooks analysis

The data of coursebook analysis were collected according to the task evaluation criteria. Each task was analyzed according to the checklist. In the analysis, if one task matched one sub-item of the goals, the task was said to match the goals. This was the same to input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings. Each task was analyzed according to the evaluation criteria, and the frequency of each item in the criteria was counted. All the tasks counted were 464 in total and they were used for calculating the percentages. In each part, the tasks were counted separately and the

sum of the tasks might not match each sub-item, because one task might match more than one sub-item in each part.

One example of task evaluation with this criteria is provided to demonstrate the application of the criteria. In this one warming up task, students were asked to listen to the music on the tape, and then discuss the four questions with their partners.

Figure 3.3 An example of task evaluation

WARMING UP

① BEIJING TOKYO

② OTTAWA WASHINGTON DC

③ BRASILIA BUENOS AIRES

④ CAIRO

⑤ LONDON BERLIN PARIS

⑥ ST. PETERSBURG MOSCOW IRKUTSK

1 Listen to the music on the tape. Where do you think the music comes from?

2 After listening to the tape, discuss the following questions with your partner.

- 1 Which piece of music do you like best? Why?
- 2 What makes you think this music comes from ...?
- 3 What are the differences between the songs you have heard?
- 4 Can you guess what the songs are about?

This task can be characterized as follows:

Goals:	Exchange personal information
Input:	Text is slightly adapted to suit the students, but still retain most of its authentic features
Activities:	Being authentic in terms of reflecting real-world tasks
Learner roles:	The centre of class
Teacher roles:	Facilitator and director
Settings:	1. Promote learner-centeredness, i.e. learners are involved in learning through doing or using the language learned;

2. Provide learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real-life purpose to them.

Then, in the checklist of criteria, “√” was put in the aspects that this task matched.

3.4.2 Oral communication test

Students took the oral communication test at the end of the semester, and the test included two steps. The first was the listening and responding test conducted in the school language laboratory. The listening text was recorded on CD. All the 59 students were asked to listen to the CD twice, and record their responses by the multimedia equipments in the laboratory. Then all the records were collected.

The speaking test was in the form of a conversation between the researcher and the students. The students took the interview one by one in one room, and the whole process was recorded. To avoid leaking test information, each student was asked not to tell their classmates the content of the test. It was told to students that the test was just the researcher’s study and this would not affect their studying or scores. The interview took two days with the same interviewer. These all helped to be fair for each student.

Two experienced native English speakers scored the responses of both listening and responding test and interview of each student into different levels question by question and in whole according to the scoring criteria of IELTS speaking test bands (see Appendix D) from 0 to 9.

3.4.3 NCEE

The proficiency test (NCEE) was conducted by the China Education Committee in the whole mainland of China in June. All the subjects took the test. Then the papers of all the students in Henan Province were collected by the Ministry of Education at Henan Province. The objective items were on the answer sheets and scored by computer. For the writing part which requires subjective evaluation, many experienced English teachers were chosen from many senior high schools to attend

the training of Ministry of Education to mark it to ensure the fairness. The teachers were divided into different groups under the management of the supervisor from the NCEE committee of Ministry of Education. If they encountered some items for which they could not make a decision, they could ask the supervisor to conduct a discussion about the item. During marking the test papers, all the paper was sealed up to avoid leaking students' personal information to keep the fairness. All the students' scores were published later in June by the National Education Committee. Both the total score of each student and the average score of the whole class were collected.

3.5 Data analysis

In order to answer all the five research questions, the descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data in terms of frequencies for means and percentages. The data analysis tools and methods are introduced in details according to each research question and instrument below.

3.5.1 Coursebook analysis

For the coursebooks analysis, quantitative data were collected. Frequencies and percentages were employed to describe the communicative tasks which matched the goals, input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings compared to all the tasks. Then the frequency of each sub-item in the criteria was calculated. At last, the percentages of the communicative tasks of all the tasks in goals, input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings were discussed in terms of communicative levels to answer the research question 1.

3.5.2 NCEE

The students' scores collected from the test paper were quantitatively analyzed by descriptive statistics in frequencies, and percentages and the average score of all the students in the whole test were calculated to reveal the overall students' proficiency levels to answer the research question 2.

3.5.3 Oral communication test

The assessments of both students' listening and responding and speaking performance were examined by the scores marked by two experienced native English speakers. The data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

First, the listening and responding test and the speaking test were analyzed separately. In the listening and responding test, each student's score and all the students' average score were investigated. Then, each student's average score and all the students' average score of the speaking test were provided. Second, the average score of the listening and responding test and that of the speaking test were compared and studied. Third, all the students' average score of the listening and responding test and the speaking test was analyzed according to the scoring criteria of IELTS speaking test bands to answer research question 3, students' oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks.

To answer research question 4, there was no need to collect new data since the collected data could be used in the comparison. First, in order to examine whether there was a relationship between students' general proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities, each students' total NCEE score and oral communicative test score were compared statistically to check whether the relationship was significant or not. Second, the relationship between the percentage of communicative tasks included in the coursebooks and students' total scores of NCEE scores and oral communicative test scores were compared to find the relationship.

The whole findings were then discussed and suggestions were made.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports and discusses the results of the data analysis conducted according to the research methodology described in Chapter 3 to answer the four research questions raised in Chapter 1.

4.1 Findings

In order to present the findings in a clear and coherent manner, the results are organized according to the four research questions of this study.

4.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the communicative levels of the coursebooks used in China?

There are totally 464 tasks in the coursebooks. In the coursebook analysis, 377 tasks were counted separately and matched the communicative goals. 292 tasks were counted separately and matched the communicative input. 340 tasks were counted separately and matched the communicative activities. 463 tasks were counted and matched the communicative learner roles. 456 tasks were counted separately and matched the communicative teacher roles. Then 495 tasks were counted and matched with communicative settings.

To address the results clearly, the frequency and percentage of each item were discussed separately in goals, input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings and then the overall results of the coursebook analysis below.

4.1.1.1 Goals

There are six main items in the goals part, and there are many sub-items under these six main aspects. The frequencies and percentages of the six items are provided

in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative goals

Aspects of Goals		Frequency	Percentage
1. Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships;		5	1.08%
2. Exchanging	2.1 information	66	14.22%
	2.2 ideas	52	11.21%
	2.3 opinions	48	10.35%
	2.4 attitudes	2	0.43%
	2.5 feelings	6	1.29%
	2.6 and to get things done through interactions;	7	1.51%
3. acquiring information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language e.g.	3.1 books,	59	12.72%
	3.2 magazines,	61	13.15%
	3.3 newspapers,	39	8.41%
	3.4 brochures,	10	2.16%
	3.5 documents,	0	0%
	3.6 signs,	2	0.43%
	3.7 notices,	0	0%
	3.8 films,	1	0.22%
	3.9 television,	2	0.43%
	3.10 slides,	2	0.43%
	3.11 tape,	38	8.19%
	3.12 radio,	7	1.51%
	3.13 public announcements,	1	0.22%
	3.14 lectures	22	4.74%
	3.15 written report etc.	10	2.16%
4. using this information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language in some way;		18	3.88%

Continued

Aspects of Goals		Frequency	Percentage
5. listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language e.g.	5.1 stories,	0	0%
	5.2 poems,	3	0.65%
	5.3 songs,	1	0.22%
	5.4 rhymes,	0	0%
	5.5 drama	3	0.65%
6. for certain learners, creating them themselves.		1	0.22%
Total		377	81.25%

As shown in Table 4.1, there are 5 tasks (1.08%) matching the communicative goals in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. The distribution of tasks which matched item 2 of goals are like this: 66 tasks (14.22%) for exchanging information, 52 for ideas (11.21%), 48 for opinions (10.35%), 2 for attitudes (0.43%), 6 for feelings (1.29%) and 7 for getting things done through interactions (1.51%). The highest is 66 tasks (14.22%) matching the goal of exchanging information, while the lowest is 2 tasks for exchanging attitudes (0.43%).

Moreover, the details of the tasks matching the goals of acquiring information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language are described in the table, too. As shown, there are 15 resources discussed. 61 tasks (13.15%) are from magazines, and this is the highest in this item. 59 tasks (12.72%) come from books and this is the second highest in this goal. The number of tasks in the descending order are 39 (8.41%) from newspapers, 38 (8.19%) from tape, 22 (4.74%) from lectures, 10 (2.16%) from brochures, 10 (2.16%) from written report, 7 (1.51%) from radio, 2 (0.43%) from signs, 2 (0.43%) from television, 2 (0.43%) from slides, 1 (0.22%) from public announcements, 1 (0.22%) from films, and no task from documents or notices. The lowest frequency is 0 and lies in documents and notices.

The tasks matching the goal of using this information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language in some way are 18 tasks (3.88%). Only 1 (0.22%) task matches the goal of for certain learners, creating them themselves. Also,

the number of tasks matching the goal of listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language are shown in the table. As seen, there are 3 tasks (0.65%) in the poem part, 3 tasks (0.65%) in the drama part, 1 task (0.22%) matching the songs item, but there is no task matching the stories or rhymes.

From Table 4.1, it can be found that of all the 464 tasks, 377 tasks (81.25%) matched the communicative goals in whole.

4.1.1.2 Input

There are two sub-items in the input part, and the frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative input

Aspects of Input	Frequency	Percentage
1. Activity is the rehearsal for the real world	213	45.91%
2. Text is slightly adapted to suit the students, but still retain most of its authentic features.	95	20.47%
Total	292	62.93%

As Table 4.2 shows, the activities of the 213 tasks (45.91%) are the rehearsals for the real world. The texts of 95 tasks (20.4%) are slightly adapted to suit the students, but still retain most of their authentic features. Totally, of all the 464 tasks, 292 tasks (62.93%) matched the communicative input. 292 was not the sum of item 1 (213) and item 2 (95) in the table because one task may match many sub-items in the input part. So the 292 tasks matching the communicative input were counted separately. This is much lower compared to the 377 tasks (81.25%) matching communicative goals.

4.1.1.3 Activities

The frequencies and percentages of the communicative activities are shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative activities

Aspects of Activities		Frequency	Percentage
1. being authentic in terms of	1.1 reflecting real-world tasks,	269	57.97%
	1.2 promoting learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication;	104	22.41%
2. designed to help develop	2.1 the accuracy of learners' target language including fully authentic (skill using) and semi-authentic (skill getting),	190	40.95%
	2.2 fluency of learners' target language.	27	5.82%
Total		340	73.28%

As Table 4.3 shows, the activities of 269 tasks (57.97%) are authentic in terms of reflecting real-world tasks, and the activities of 104 tasks (22.41%) are authentic in promoting learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication. There are also 190 tasks (40.95%) designed to help develop the accuracy of learners' target language including fully authentic (skill using) and semi-authentic (skill getting) ones, and 27 tasks (5.82%) were designed to help develop the fluency of learners' target language. As a whole, of all the 464 tasks, 340 (73.28%) tasks match the communicative activities. 340 tasks was counted separately and each of them matched with more than one sub-item in the table. Compared to the percentage of communicative goals (81.25%), the percentage of communicative activities is lower.

4.1.1.4 Learner roles

Another component is learner roles, and the results of the tasks matching the criteria are shown below.

Table 4.4 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative learner roles

Aspects of Learner roles	Frequency	Percentage
1. The centre of class	459	98.92%
2. Negotiative, be part of a social group	30	6.47%
3. Move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses	18	3.88%
Total	463	99.78%

From Table 4.4, the results of the communicative learner roles analysis is very clear. 459 tasks (98.92%) matched that the learners were the centre of class. In 30 tasks (6.47%), learner roles are negotiative and part of a social group. 18 tasks (3.88%) help learners to move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses. Totally, there are 463 tasks (99.78%) matching the learner's communicative roles. In the 463 tasks, each of them matched at least one sub-item in the table. This is the highest of the percentages of the six main components in the task evaluation criteria.

4.1.1.5 Teacher roles

There are three sub-items of the teacher roles. The frequencies and percentages of the tasks matching the teacher's communicative roles are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative teacher roles

Aspects of Teacher roles	Frequency	Percentage
1. Facilitator	250	53.88%
2. Participant	56	12.07%
3. Director	150	32.33%
Total	456	98.06%

According to the data provided in Table 4.5, teachers play a role of facilitator in 250 tasks (53.88%). There are also 56 tasks (12.07%) in which teachers' role is participant. 150 tasks (32.33%) matched with the communicative teacher roles as a director. As a whole, there are 456 tasks (98.06%) matching the communicative teacher roles. In the 456 tasks, each matched more than one sub-item in the table.

4.1.1.6 Settings

The findings of the coursebook analysis in settings are provided in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Frequency and percentage of the tasks matching the communicative settings

Aspects of Settings	Frequency	Percentage
1. promote learner-centeredness, i.e. learners are involved in learning through doing or using the language learned;	454	97.85%%
2. provide learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real-life purpose to them.	126	27.16%
Total	459	98.92%

In Table 4.6, it is shown that there are 454 tasks (97.85%) matching the communicative settings in promoting learner-centeredness, i.e. learners are involved

in learning through doing or using the language learned. There are also 126 tasks (27.16%) providing learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real-life purpose to them. For the settings as a whole, 459 tasks (98.92%) are communicative. In the 495 tasks, each matched more than one sub-item in the table.

4.1.1.7 Summary

Based on the detail findings above, Table 4.7, the summary of the frequency and percentage of communicative task was provided below to show the overall picture of the coursebook evaluation.

As seen in Table 4.7, of all the 464 tasks, 377 tasks (81.25%) matched the communicative goals. 292 tasks (62.93%) matched the communicative input. This is the lowest percentage of the six parts in the evaluation criteria. 340 tasks (73.28%) matched the communicative activities. 463 tasks (99.78%) matched the communicative learner roles. This is the highest. Also, the data of other two parts are high. For the teacher roles, 456 tasks (98.06%) are communicative and 459 tasks (98.92%) matched the communicative settings. Compared to the criteria of communicative levels, the coursebook are highly communicative in goals, learner roles, teacher roles and settings. The communicative levels in input and activities are average.

Table 4.7 The frequency and percentage of communicative task

Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Goals	377	81.25%
Input	292	62.93%
Activities	340	73.28%
Learner roles	463	99.78%
Teacher roles	456	98.06%
Settings	459	98.92%

The overall percentages of matching the communicative task components are high. However, not all the percentages shown in the Table 4.7 are high. The

percentage of communicative input is only 62.93%, which is the lowest in the table. The percentage of communicative activities is 73.28%, which is very low compared to goals (81.25%), learner roles (99.78%), teacher roles (98.06%) and settings (98.92%). This means that a lot of input and activities are not authentic or the rehearsal of the real world. Many activities lack communication and practice. These are the weaknesses of this set of coursebooks.

Therefore, from Table 4.7, it can be concluded that after many improvements the coursebooks are highly communicative but still with the weaknesses in input and activity.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: What are students' general proficiency levels after studying the coursebooks?

The proficiency test scores of the 59 students are showed in Table 4.8. They were published by the National Education Committee after the test.

Table 4.8 Students' scores of NCEE

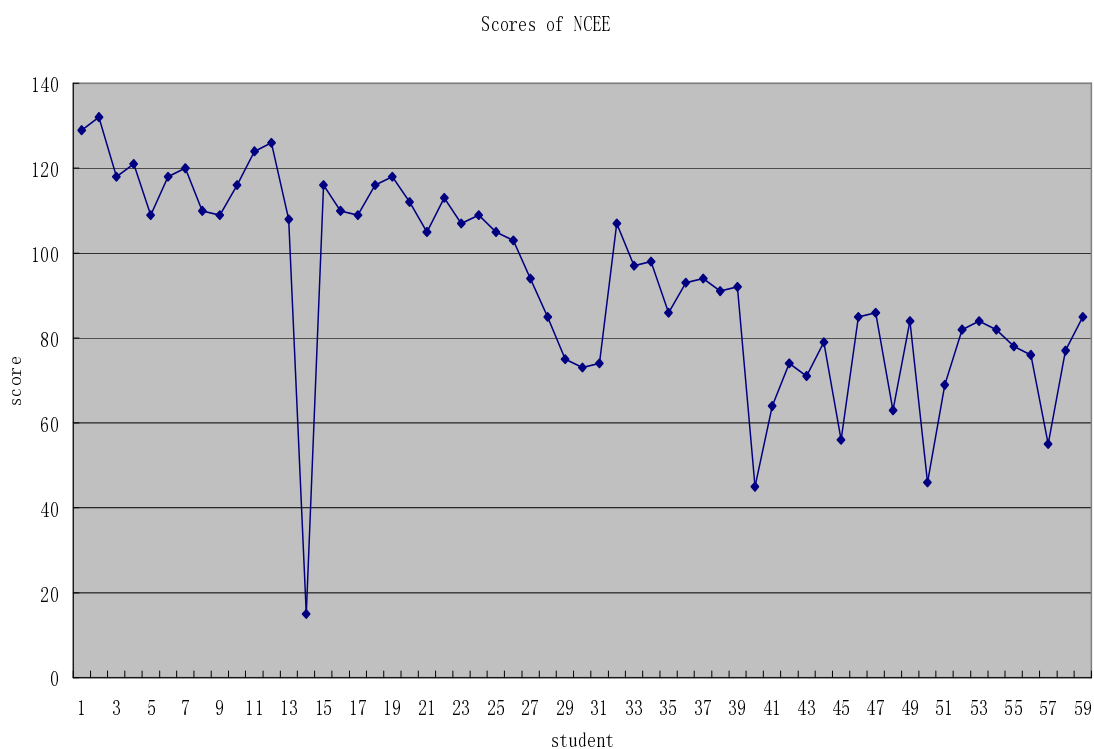


Table 4.9 Scores of students' proficiency

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S. D.
Score	59	15.00	132.00	92.85	23.70
Valid N (listwise)	59				

As shown in Table 4.8 and Table 4.9, the highest score was 132, while the lowest score was 15, and the mean of NCEE score of all the 59 students was 92.85 (61.90%). Compared to the total of 150 points, the 92.85 (61.90%) is a little over the passing point 90 (60%). NCEE is a proficiency test designed for students who graduate from senior high schools. The mean score 92.85% meant that the students achieved the objectives after studying the coursebooks, but not outstandingly impressive. The students' proficiency levels are average after studying the coursebooks.

4.1.3 Research Question 3: What are students' oral communicative abilities after studying the coursebooks?

For the oral communication test, scores of the listening and responding test and the speaking test are showed in Table 4.10.

In Table 4.10, the pink line is all the 59 students' scores of listening and responding test, while the blue line is their scores of the speaking test.

Based on the scores of the 59 students, the descriptive statistics of students' scores of listening and responding test and speaking test are provided in Table 4.11 and 4.12.

Table 4.10 Students' scores of oral communication test

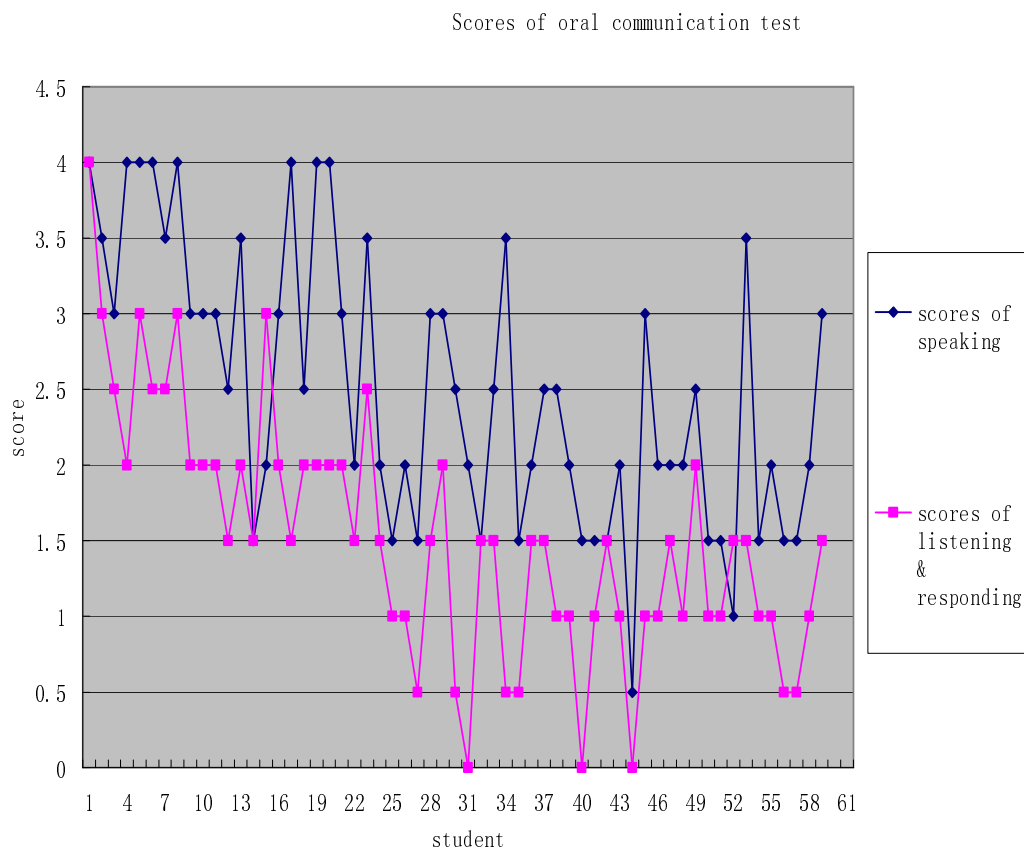


Table 4.11 Results of the listening and responding test and the speaking test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Lis & Resp	59	.00	4.00	1.52	.81
Speaking	59	.50	4.00	2.50	.92
Valid N (listwise)	59				

As Table 4.11 shows, the highest score is 4.00, while the lowest is 0.00 in listening and responding test. In the speaking test, the highest score is 4.00 and the lowest is 0.50. The mean score of all the 59 students in the listening and responding

test is 1.52, while the mean score in the speaking test is 2.50.

Both 1.52 (16.85%) and 2.50 (27.78%) are very low compared to the highest score (band 9). In the IELTS speaking band descriptors (public version), score 0 to 9 are described by fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation (see Appendix D).

The mean score 1.52 of the listening and responding test is considered to be band 2 which describes the students' performance as follows: pause lengthily before most words and there is little communication possible. Students only produce isolated words or memorized utterance and they cannot produce basic sentence forms. The speech is often unintelligible, too. Proficiency at band 2 is very poor and the communication fails. On the other hand, the mean score 2.50 of the speaking test is considered to be band 3. In this band, students speak with long pauses and have limited ability to link simple sentences. They give only simple responses and are frequently unable to convey basic messages. Students use simple vocabulary to convey personal information and have insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics. Students attempt basic sentence forms but with limited success, or rely on apparently memorized utterances and make numerous errors except in memorized expressions. They also show some of the features of band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of band 4 in pronunciation.

From Table 4.10, it is very clear that students' scores of listening and responding test are lower than the scores of speaking test. This might be caused by the test format, listening input recording and content.

On the one hand, the listening and responding test is difficult in its required tasks. Students listen carefully to catch the information and respond to it. If they missed some information or were unconfident about the information they heard, their oral performance could be negatively affected. The recording of the listening text was read by an English native speaker. The students might be unfamiliar with the accent which might make it difficult for them to understand. Third, the test was given in a language laboratory and it was formal. This could make students feel nervous though it might have helped with the fact that all other noises were well filtered out. In contrast, the speaking test is relaxed and easy. First, the pronunciation of the interviewer was easy to understand, because she is also a Chinese. Second, the

interview procedure was informal, and the interviewer asked questions step by step, from something about themselves to some familiar topics. This helped relax the students and make them confident to express their information and ideas freely.

Furthermore, the contents of the test were different. The texts of the listening and responding test were difficult because they were longer and the topic was a little far from students' life, while the topics in the speaking test were familiar to the students themselves and their daily life. The questions were in simple sentences and very easy to understand. Therefore, the students could do the oral performance better than the listening and responding test.

The overall picture of the oral communicative test is given in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12 Descriptive Statistics of oral communicative test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Oral	59	.25	4.00	2.01	.79
Valid N (listwise)	59				

Based on the scores provided in Table 4.12, the means of the whole oral communication test of all the 59 students were 2.01, which is very low compared with the highest Band 9. The mean score 2.01 is considered to be band 2. In this band, the oral communication fails. Therefore, it can be summarized that students' oral communicative abilities are very poor.

4.1.4 Research question 4: What are the relationships among the communicative levels of the coursebooks, students' proficiency levels and students' oral communicative abilities?

According to the findings above, it is known that the coursebooks used in China have a high communicative level in whole although with weaknesses in input and activities. Students' proficiency levels measured by NCEE are average with the mean score of 92.85 (61.90%) and students' oral communicative abilities are very

poor with the average of band 2. Coursebooks are the important tools and media to achieve the course objectives, while students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities are the output after studying the coursebooks. The relationships among them are provided below.

4.1.4.1 The communicative levels of the coursebooks and students' proficiency levels

The coursebooks used in China were designed according to the objectives of English course at senior high schools set by the Ministry of Education. The NCEE is also constructed according to the objectives to evaluate students' output after studying the English course at senior high schools in China. Coursebooks may be one important factor affecting students' proficiency levels.

In this study, the coursebooks are found to be highly communicative in whole and match the course objectives, and the students' proficiency level is average (61.90%) which is just a passing level of the test. This means that the students just managed to achieve the course objectives through studying the coursebooks.

In summary, there is no relationship between the communicative levels of the coursebooks and students' proficiency levels. The coursebooks might be on the right track in developing students' proficiency levels, but the results were not apparent yet.

4.1.4.2 The communicative levels of the coursebooks and students' oral communicative abilities

The results of this study show that the coursebooks are found to be highly communicative in whole, while the problem of Chinese students' inability to communicate still exists after all the reforms. This means that students still could not communicate even after studying with communicative materials. This gives rise to a question about what might have taken negative effects on Chinese students' communicative abilities.

The in-depth investigation of the coursebooks revealed that the coursebooks may still be one of the causes; the percentages of communicative input (62.93%) and

activities (73.28%) are very low, compared to goals (81.25%), learner roles (99.78%), teacher roles (98.06%) and settings (98.92%). These low percentages reveal that a lot of input and activities included in the coursebooks are not authentic or the rehearsal of the real world. Many of the input texts were not from real situations in real life. They were just written for the purpose of teaching English. It was also found that many activities are individual work, so communication and cooperation with others could not happen. The inauthentic input provides inauthentic exposure for students and that couples with the insufficiency of opportunities to communicate or rehearse the language in real situations. So the knowledge students learned is more of text language and practice which is not communicatively meaningful. In real communication, they may find that it is very difficult for them to apply the knowledge they learned to situations in the real world, even if they could achieve high scores in tests. These may cause students' inability to communicate and are the weaknesses of this set of coursebooks, because without authentic texts and authentic activities, it is very difficult for communication to happen. Therefore, more authentic input and more activities in pair or group work are needed to provide opportunities to students to communicate with others in English.

In conclusion, although the coursebooks used in China are highly communicative in the whole, the input and activities parts which are not authentic or the rehearsal of the real world are found to be the weaknesses of the coursebooks. Therefore, the inauthentic input and inauthentic activities may be one cause of the students' poor communicative abilities.

4.1.4.3 Students' proficiency levels and oral communicative abilities

In English education, proficiency level usually goes with the oral communicative ability. That is, learners with high proficiency normally have high oral communicative ability, but this may be different in China. Many Chinese teachers and educators complain that high proficiency level does not mean good oral communicative ability. In this study, the students' proficiency levels are found to be average and merely passed the passing point, while their oral communicative abilities are very poor. These findings verified the complaints.

Table 4.13 Difference between students' oral communicative abilities and proficiency levels

	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Proficiency	30.09	58	.00	61.70	57.78	66.02
Oral comm.	19.42	58	.00	22.32	20.02	24.62

As Table 4.13 shows, the difference between students' oral communicative abilities and proficiency levels is significant at 0.05. This means that students' oral communicative abilities are significantly not related to their proficiency levels. The overall pictures show that students' proficiency levels are average and oral communicative abilities are still poor. Many experts and teachers in China found that Chinese students could get high scores in standardized tests but they were poor in oral communication. In this study, the oral communication test scores of the students were very low, but the scores in the proficiency test were not high, either. It could be said that the learners were not successful after studying the coursebooks; their proficiency were just average, while their oral communicative ability was poor and the difference was significant.

4.2 Further discussions

The findings show that students' oral communicative abilities are still poor. This is in accordance with the complaints made apparent by Liu & Yu (1998), Rao (2001), Xu (2004), Zhuang (2007), Chen (2009), Fan (2009), and Cai (2009). Students' proficiency levels are average compared to their poor oral communicative abilities. This proves the saying that many Chinese students have difficulties in English oral communication, despite their acceptable proficiency levels.

The findings also show that the coursebooks after improvements are highly

communicative in whole with the weaknesses in input and activities. Apart from the weaknesses of coursebooks, some other factors may play a part in causing students' inability in oral communication. Meng (2009) points out that teacher may be one factor affecting students' inability to communicate as teacher is the user of coursebooks and class activity organizer. Even communicative coursebooks may not be able to facilitate communicative language teaching if teachers are not capable of using it. Therefore, teacher training may be required to improve their teaching more communicatively.

In China, class size may be also one factor of students' inability in communication. Meng (2009) observes that teachers have to teach large classes, and so it is difficult to handle communicative tasks in the classroom. To facilitate CLT, class may be made small to help teacher conduct activities. However, more and more people go to school, and the class size is large in China. As a result, the policy needs to be changed to allow small classes to be organized for language teaching and learning.

Another factor may be the school policy. Although the policy of Ministry of Education in China encourages to develop students' communicative ability, as test score is the most important criterion to evaluate schools, teachers and students, the policies in many schools also focus on achieving high scores in tests more than developing students' oral communicative ability. Then, teachers who want to have good careers have to teach according to the policies, because if they put developing students' oral communicative ability as the teaching emphasis instead of gaining high scores in tests, they may be criticized by school heads, students or parents or even fired. Therefore, in many schools, English teachers are trained in what to teach and how to teach, and teachers have to teach according to the school policy which emphasizes teaching grammar. This may lead to students' inability to communicate.

Rao (2001) suggests that another factor, students may play a part. Even if teachers teach communicative coursebooks communicatively, students may achieve poor oral communicative ability because of their emotions, motivations, learning styles and strategies, intelligence and attitudes. Rao (2001) also finds that students like non-communicative activities more than communicative ones. This means that students' preference takes an effect on their poor oral communicative ability.

However, the problem should be analyzed in whole. This, in turn, suggested that other factors such as teaching methodology, learning styles and strategies, or education system should be investigate whether they come into play.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the main research findings presented in Chapter 4, followed by implications of the study and finally recommendations for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the main findings

5.1.1 This study investigated the coursebooks widely used at many senior high schools in China, named *Senior English for China (Student's Book 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B and 3) (2007)* to find out the communicative levels of tasks in terms of goals, input, activities, learner roles, teacher roles and settings. The task evaluation criteria was taken from Nunan (1989)'s framework for analyzing communicative tasks. It was found that the communicative percentages in goals, learner roles, teacher roles and settings were very high, and the communicative level of the coursebooks was high in whole. However, the coursebooks were found to have weaknesses in input and activities of which the communicative percentages were low compared to others. These may be said to be the weaknesses of the coursebooks.

5.1.2 To discover the students' proficiency after studying the coursebooks, the results of the National College Entrance Examination of English was used. It was found that the mean score of the 59 students was 92.85 (61.90%) which was just a little over the passing point of 90 (60%). It can be concluded that students' proficiency levels are average after studying the coursebooks.

5.1.3 To find out the students' oral communicative abilities after using the improved coursebooks, an oral communication test which included a listening and responding test and a speaking test adapted from the IELTS speaking test was used. IELTS scoring band descriptors was used to evaluate the performance. It was found

that the 59 students' mean score was 2.01 (22.32%) compared to the total score of 9. The result of the test showed that the students' oral communicative abilities were very poor.

5.1.4 The findings showed that the communicative level of the coursebooks was high, students' proficiency level was average and oral communicative ability was low. The students' proficiency level and oral communicative ability were significantly different. There was no relationship between the coursebooks and students' proficiency levels. The weaknesses of the coursebooks in input and activities might be one of the causes of students' inability to communicate. However, other factors may be involved, e.g. teacher, school policy, student, NCEE, teaching methodology, learning styles and strategies, and education system.

5.2 Implications of the study

The findings of the current study suggest a number of useful implications for English language classroom teaching and learning and for designing instruction materials in the Chinese context. The implications are as follows.

5.2.1 Coursebooks

The findings of the current study showed that the coursebooks were highly communicative as a whole. The weaknesses were found in input and activities. So the authors of instructional materials should consider improving the coursebooks to be more authentic in input and activities. Guidance and instructional explanations to indicate how teachers should teach English communicatively should be provided as teachers can handle their teaching more effectively and students will have more opportunities to communicate or rehearse the real world language.

5.2.2 Language teaching and learning

In teaching, how teachers use materials to make the class communicative is very important for developing students' communicative ability. In real classes, many teachers still teach grammar to students. Many students also think that learning English is to learn grammar. CLT may not be accepted and applied by many teachers and students. Therefore, teacher training is needed to enable teachers to teach communicatively.

5.2.3 NCEE

NCEE is very important to students' life and the score of the test is the criteria for students entering colleges in China. The backwash effect of the test is very wide and apparent in China. It is the direction of English teaching at senior high schools. Therefore, the content used in teaching and learning were in concordance with the test papers or the grammar materials in order to develop students' abilities in doing the test. So the lack of speaking part in NCEE may be one of the causes of students' inability to communicate. The backwash effect of NCEE cannot be ignored, but it can be positively used. Therefore, it is very necessary to improve the NCEE to be more balanced in terms of skills measured to help develop students' oral communicative abilities.

5.3 Recommendations for further studies and coursebooks

Based on the given findings and limitations of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested for further studies.

Firstly, the coursebooks was analyzed by one person in this study. So there may be some subjective opinions. Therefore, to make this study more objective, it's better to involve at least two evaluators.

Secondly, this study is a case study in one senior high school in China, so it cannot represent all the high schools in China. It is necessary to conduct a study to cover more students at more senior high schools in China to generalize the results.

Thirdly, the present study investigated one of the two main sets of coursebooks widely used in China. Although the study presented some results regarding the weaknesses in input and activities as one cause of students' inability to communicate, many Chinese students who do not study this set of coursebooks also have poor oral communicative abilities. Therefore, investigation should be done with another set of coursebook named *Senior High English* to see if it lends itself to communicative language teaching. Then a fuller picture of the situations in China may be gained.

Fourthly, coursebook may not be the only factor affecting students' oral communicative abilities. There can be many other factors, such as teacher, school policy, student, teaching methodology, education system, National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), learning styles and strategies. The weaknesses of the improved coursebooks in input and activity were found to probably be one of the causes of students' inability to communicate, but other factors mentioned can also have a part. Therefore, studies on other factors can be conducted to investigate the relationships between these factors and students' inability to communicate.

Lastly, the coursebooks were found to be mostly communicative as a whole, but since they did not entail students' ability to communicate, teachers might be considered as another important factor affecting students' oral communicative abilities. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an interview, an investigation by questionnaire or an observation to find out how coursebooks are used in teaching and studying, i.e. whether the real classrooms are communicatively run by the teachers.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
Task Evaluation Criteria

Aspects of Goals		Task 1	Task 2
1. Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships;			
2. Exchanging	2.1 information		
	2.2 ideas		
	2.3 opinions		
	2.4 attitudes		
	2.5 feelings		
	2.6 and to get things done through interactions;		
3. acquiring information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language e.g.	3.1 books,		
	3.2 magazines,		
	3.3 newspapers,		
	3.4 brochures,		
	3.5 documents,		
	3.6 signs,		
	3.7 notices,		
	3.8 films,		
	3.9 television,		
	3.10 slides,		
	3.11 tape,		
	3.12 radio,		
	3.13 public announcements,		
	3.14 lectures		
	3.15 written report etc.		
4. using this information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language in some way;			
5. listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language e.g.	5.1 stories,		
	5.2 poems,		
	5.3 songs,		
	5.4 rhymes,		
	5.5 drama		
6. for certain learners, creating them themselves.			
Sum of Goals			

Aspects of Input		Task 1	Task 2
1. Activity is the rehearsal for the real world			
2. Text is slightly adapted to suit the students, but still retain most of its authentic features.			
Sum of Input			
Aspects of Activities		Task 1	Task 2
1. being authentic in terms of	1.1 reflecting real-world tasks,		
	1.2 promoting learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication;		
2. designed to help develop	2.1 the accuracy of learners' target language including fully authentic (skill using) and semi-authentic (skill getting),		
	2.2 fluency of learners' target language.		
Sum of activities			
Aspects of Learner roles		Task 1	Task 2
1. The centre of class.			
2. Negotiative, be part of a social group.			
3. Move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses.			
Sum of learner roles			
Aspects of Teacher roles		Task 1	Task 2
1. Facilitator			
2. Participant			
3. Director			
Sum of teacher roles			
Aspects of settings		Task 1	Task 2
1. promote learner-centeredness, i.e. learners are involved in learning through doing or using the language learned;			
2. provide learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real-life purpose to them.			
Sum of settings			
Total			

APPENDIX B
Oral Communication Test

Oral communication test

Student Name.....Student No.....Date.....

Section A Listening and responding

Listen to the text twice and respond to it by

- 1. commenting on the place that was introduced in the text (e.g. setting, attraction and price).**
- 2. saying whether you want to visit the place or not, and why?**

Notes:

You will have to talk about the topic for one or two minutes.

You have one minute to think about what you are going to say.

You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Section B Speaking test

1. The interviewer will ask the student about him/herself as follows:

- (1) What's your name and where do you come from?
- (2) How many people are there in your family and who are they?
- (3) What do you like doing?
- (4) Who is your best friend?

2. The interviewer will ask the student about some familiar topics as follows:

- (1) How important are clothes and fashion to you? [Why/Why not?]
- (2) What kind of clothes do you dislike? [Why?]
- (3) How different are the clothes you wear now from those you wore 10 years ago?
- (4) What do you think the clothes we wear say about us?

APPENDIX C

Listening Text of Oral Communication Test

Listening material of section A**Dream Paradise**

Living in the Sanya Marriott Resort & Spa, guests will feel as if they came to the dream paradise. All the staff members of the Sanya Marriott Resort & Spa will spare no effort to let your tropical dream come true. Situated in the most enchanting bay in South China, Marriott boasts the picturesque natural scenery, and provides a fictitious land of peace, away from the turmoil of the world. The white, fine and soft beaches, the fascinating gardens, the dreamlike swimming pools by the sea, the pleasant Spa experience, delicious food and mellow wine will make all guests enjoy themselves so much as to forget to go home. Welcome to the Sanya Marriott Resort & Spa!

Source from: *Hainan Travel Guide*

APPENDIX D
Scoring Criteria of Oral Communication Test

IELTS speaking band descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features • develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from ‘slips’ characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from ‘slips’ characteristic of native speaker speech
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language • develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a wide range of structures flexibly • produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/nonsystematic Errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a wide range of pronunciation features • sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses • is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has Minimal effect on intelligibility

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
7	<p>Speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility • frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inaccuracies • generally paraphrases successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility • may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control • shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going • may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in Coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • errors are frequent and may lead to Misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a limited range of pronunciation features • attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks with long pauses • has limited ability to link simple sentences • gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses simple vocabulary to convey personal Information • has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorized utterances • makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pauses lengthily before most words • little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only produces isolated words or memorized utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no communication possible • no rateable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not attend 			


APPENDIX E 1

The Examples of Tasks in Students' Book 1A, 1B, 2A & 2B

1. Warming up

WARMING UP

How creative are you? Are you good at solving problems and thinking in new ways? Work together with your partner and solve these problems.

Useful things	Talk box	True or false?																
<p>How many new uses can you think of for the following items?</p> <p>1 A toothpick _____</p> <p>2 A sock _____</p> <p>3 A plastic bag _____</p>	<p>How many words can you make by moving the sides of the box? You can move any side as many steps as you wish.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>I</td><td>D</td><td>R</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>O</td><td>A</td><td>T</td></tr> <tr><td>A</td><td>T</td><td>O</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>R</td><td>E</td><td>M</td></tr> </table> <p>Example: STOP SIDR COAT ATOE PREM</p>	S	I	D	R	C	O	A	T	A	T	O	E	P	R	E	M	<p>1 The word "boat" can be spelled using four of the letters from the word "automobile".</p> <p>2 11 minutes past 5 o'clock is 48 minutes before 6 o'clock.</p> <p>3 If you turn a left-handed glove inside out, it will fit on a right hand.</p> 
S	I	D	R															
C	O	A	T															
A	T	O	E															
P	R	E	M															

2. Listening

 **LISTENING**

Listen to the three songs on the tape and then fill out the form below.

	1	2	3
What would be a good title for the song?			
What is the song about?			
How does the song make you feel?			
Do you like the song? (1 = not at all, 10 = very much)			
How would you describe the song?			

3. Speaking

 **SPEAKING**

Jane wants to buy a cellphone. Before she buys one, she asks her parents and her best friend what they think.

<p>1 You are Jane. You want to buy a cellphone. You think that a cellphone is very useful because</p> <p>1 _____</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>3 _____</p>	<p>2 You are Jane's best friend. You do not think Jane should buy a cellphone because</p> <p>1 _____</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>3 _____</p>
<p>3 You are Jane's mother. You do not think Jane should buy a cellphone because</p> <p>1 _____</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>3 _____</p>	<p>4 You are Jane's father. You think that Jane should buy a cellphone because</p> <p>1 _____</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>3 _____</p>

Work in groups of four. Decide which role each group member should play and then take a few minutes to prepare the role cards. Report your decision to the class when you have finished the discussion.

Agreement	Disagreement
Absolutely. That's exactly what I was thinking. That's a good point. That's just how I see it. That's worth thinking about.	I disagree. I'm afraid I don't agree. Well, it depends. Well, I don't know. Well, I'm not so sure about that.

4. Pre-reading

PRE-READING

Discuss these questions with your partner.

- 1 What kind of music do you like?
- 2 When you listen to a song, do you listen to the words or the music?
- 3 Do you play any musical instrument? What is your favourite instrument?
- 4 Do you like to listen to music from other countries?

5. Reading

READING

LIFE ON THE GO

Wang Mei puts her hand into her pocket, takes out her red cellphone and presses the talk key. "Hi, mum! I'm on the bus. I should be home in about ten minutes." Wang Mei is one of many Chinese teenagers who live life "on the go" and use cellphones.

Cellphones, or mobile phones, make it possible for us to talk to anyone from anywhere. Words and images are being sent throughout the world. Modern cellphones are more than just phones — they are being used as cameras and radios, and to send e-mail or surf the Internet. New functions are being added to the phones. The latest cellphones have features such as games, music and an electronic calendar that will remind you about appointments and important dates.

Cellphones have changed our behaviour and how we communicate. They are being used everywhere — sometimes where they shouldn't. One headmaster says that phones are not allowed in the classroom. "If a phone starts ringing in the classroom, teachers and students are disturbed and cannot work." The students obey the rules and agree not to use their phones in the classroom. "I don't dare to use the phone in school, because they will take it away from me," says John Hill, a student in London. John got his phone for his birthday, but his parents don't let him use it in school. Some parents worry that their children will spend too much time and money on phone calls.

Why are cellphones so popular, especially among teenagers? The answer seems to be that we have a need to stay in touch with friends and family no matter where we are or what we are doing. Having a cellphone also makes us feel safer, since we can call for help in case of an emergency. Of course, to many teenagers the cellphone is not only a useful tool but also a way to have fun and be cool.

Wang Mei calls her best friend Xiao Li at least once a day to see how she is doing and what is going



6. Post-reading

 **POST-READING**
1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 Where does blues music come from?
- 2 What does the word “rap” mean?
- 3 Why is Latin music so popular in the US? Is it popular in China?
- 4 Is music a universal language? Can you enjoy music from other parts of the world even if you don't understand the words? Are there any other universal languages? What about dancing, paintings and photographs?

2 The sentences below summarise the article. Read them and decide if they are true or false. Write the letter “T” if the sentence is true. Write “F” if it is false, and then correct the error and give the right information.

- 1 () There are only a few styles of music in the world.
- 2 () Blues is a new style of music.
- 3 () Hip-hop and rap are completely different from blues and rock.
- 4 () Santana is a well-known Latin music artist.
- 5 () Rappers sing the words to their music.
- 6 () There are many Spanish-speaking people in both North and South America.

7. Language study

Grammar**The Passive Voice (3) — The Present Continuous Passive Voice****1 Change the following sentences into the Present Continuous Passive Voice.****EXAMPLE:** *They are adding new functions to the phones.* *New functions are being added to the phones.*

- 1 They are collecting money for the broadband project.
- 2 They are writing a report about the negative effects of cellphones in school.
- 3 They are building a computer centre for the students.
- 4 The parents are taking good care of their test-tube baby.
- 5 Some scientists are studying human cloning.
- 6 They are revising the laws to protect the rights of women and children.

2 Change the following sentences into questions, using the Present Continuous Passive Voice.**EXAMPLE:** *They are building nine parks.* *How many parks are being built?*

- 1 Some students are spending as much as 200 yuan a month on their cellphones.
- 2 This company is producing new types of cellphones.
- 3 They are interviewing Michael for the job.
- 4 George is sending texts and pictures to his friend's phone.
- 5 They are developing some programmes for the human resource department of their company.

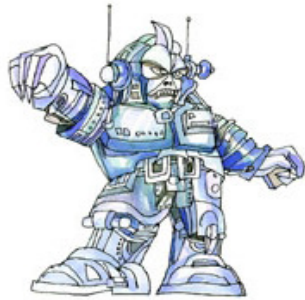
8. Integrating skills



INTEGRATING SKILLS



Reading and writing



It is the year 2374 and the machines have taken over. The earth is ruled by a great computer named Q12 that uses robots to make people work for it. It is not a happy world. The few surviving human beings are being used in the way that we use machines today: they have to make electricity for the machines, repair them when they break down, and do everything Q12 tells them to. Once, the earth was a beautiful blue planet where people lived happily among trees and animals. Now, the world is dark and dirty, with no room for happiness and fun.

But there is still hope. The human beings have been able to keep a small, secret school open since the machines took over.

In this school, the students still learn about all the wonders of the world — science, art, history, culture — and they are still allowed to dream about a better future. The leader of the humans has decided that it is time to do something to stop Q12, bring the machines and people back together, and make the world beautiful again. A group of experts were asked to solve the problem, but they failed. Now, the leader has asked a group of students to do what they can to save the earth.

Q12 cannot be defeated by force. It is too strong and no one believes that fighting a war can solve the problem. Instead, the students have decided to come up with a peaceful solution. They will try to teach Q12 about love and friendship. If they succeed, they believe that humans and machines can live together like friends in the future.

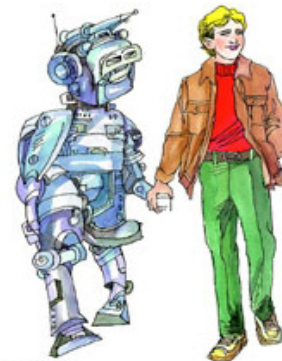
Imagine that you are one of the students chosen to solve the problem. Write a letter to Q12 in which you explain love and friendship. Remember that Q12 is a computer that does not understand how human beings feel and what human life is like. Tell Q12 about how we think, how we feel about each other, and try to give examples of love and friendship.

1 Tell Q12 who you are and why you are writing this letter.

2 Tell Q12 about love and friendship.

- Explain how love and friendship will make the world better.
- Give examples of how love and friendship will make the world better.

3 Tell Q12 what the world will be like with love and friendship.



APPENDIX E 2
The Examples of Tasks in Students' Book 3

1. Assessing



Choose three tasks from this unit and answer the questions below.

Which of the goals of this unit did you practise in this task?
What did you do to reach the goal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you prepare for the task? • What did you do to complete the task? • What did you already know / were you already able to do? • What was new or difficult?
How did you check that you had reached the goal?
What would you still like to learn?

2. Translating



Translate the following Chinese into English.

TEN GOOD HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

Some people are more successful than others. (1) _____ (明白为什么会这样的关键在于这样一个事实——成功的人有一些习惯,让他们比其他人更有效). These habits can be learnt, which means that the way to success lies open to all who make such good habits part of their pattern of behaviour.

1 Understand what is needed

Unlike tasks in school, most of the tasks we have to do in our jobs or in our personal lives do not come with clear instructions. (2) _____ (花些时间弄明白为了取得成功你必须要做的事是什么).

2 Set goals

(3) _____
(只有定好目标,你才能明确你的努力方向,并指导你的行动).

3 Manage your time

To do the things that must be done, you had better make a good plan. Be strict with yourself! Sometimes the nice things have to wait, and (4) _____ (你必须集中精力完成你正在做的).

4 One step at a time

Do not be afraid of tasks that seem to be larger than life. Rome was not built in one day. The key is taking it one step at a time.

5 First things first

(5) _____ (按照正确顺序做事情). If a task seems too big to handle, then break it up in smaller parts which are easy to take on.

6 Concentrate

Keep your eye on the ball. Concentrate on what you are doing.

7 Keep going

See the thing through to the end. (6) _____ (只是不要放弃).

APPENDIX F
Test Paper and Keys of NCEE in 2011

2011 年新课标高考英语（科）试题

第一卷

第一部分 听力（共两节，满分 30 分）

做题时先将答案标在试卷上。录音内容结束后，你将有两分钟的时间将试卷上的答案转涂到答题卡上。

第一节（共 5 小题；每小题 1.5 分，满分 7.5 分）

听下面五段对话。每段对话后有一小题，从题中所给的 A、B、C 三个选项中选出最佳选项，并标在试卷的相应位置。听完每段对话后，你都有 10 秒钟的时间来回答有关小问题和阅读下一小题。每段对话仅读一遍。

例：How much is the shirt?

- A. £ 19.15.
- B. £ 9.15.
- C. £ 9.18.

答案是 B。

1. What does the man like about the play?
 - A. The story
 - B. The ending
 - C. The actor
2. Which place are the speakers trying to find?
 - A. A hotel.
 - B. A bank..
 - C. .A restaurant.
3. What time will the two speakers meet?
 - A. 5:30
 - B. 5:10
 - C. 4:40
4. What will the man do?
 - A. Change the plan.
 - B. Wait for a phone call.
 - C. Sort tings suit.
5. What does the woman want to do?
 - A. See a film with the man.
 - B. Offer the man some help.
 - C. Listen to some great music.

第二节（共 15 小题；每小题 1.5 分，满分 22.5 分）

听下面 5 段对话或独白。每段对话后有几个小题，从题中所给的 A、B、C 三个选项中选出最佳选项，并标在试卷的相应位置。听每段对话前，你将有时间阅读各个小题，每小题 5 秒钟；听完后，各小题给出 5 秒钟的作答时间。每段对话读两遍。

听第 6 段材料，回答第 6、7 题。

6. Where is Ben??
 - A. In the kitchen.
 - B. At school.
 - C. In the park.
7. What will the children do in the afternoon?
 - A. Help set the table.
 - B. Have a party.
 - C. Do their homework..

听第7段材料，回答8、9题。

8. What are two speakers talking about?
- A family holiday
 - A business trip.
 - A travel plan.
9. Where did Rachel go?
- Spain.
 - Italy.
 - China

听第8段材料，回答第10至12题。

10. How did the woman get to know about third-hand smoke?

- From young smokers.
- From a newspaper article.
- From some smoking parents.

11. Why does the man say that he should keep away from babies??

- He has just become a father.
- He wears dirty clothes.
- He is a smoker.

12. What does the woman suggest smoking parents should do?

- Stop smoking altogether
- Smoke only outside their houses.
- Reduce dangerous matter in cigarettes.

听第9段材料，回答第13至16题。

13. Where does Michelle Ray come from

- A middle-sized city.
- A small town.
- A big city.

14. Which place would Michelle Ray take her visitors to for shopping?

- The Zen Garden.
- The Highlands.
- The Red River area.

15. What does Michelle Ray do for complete quiet?

- Go camping.
- Study in a library.
- Read at home.

16. What are the speakers talking about in general?

- Late-night shopping.
- Asian food.
- Louisville.

听第10段材料，回答第17至20题。

27. The next thing he saw was smoke _____ from behind the house.
A. rose B. rising C. to rise D. risen
28. Only when he reached the tea-house _____ it was the same place he'd been in last year.
A. he realized B. he did realize C. realized he D. did he realize
29. When Alice came to, she did not know how long she _____ there.
A. had been lying B. has been lying C. was lying D. has lain
30. The form cannot be signed by anyone _____ yourself.
A. rather than B. other than C. more than D. better than
31. The prize will go to the writer _____ story shows the most imagination.
A. that B. which C. whose D. what
32. They _____ have arrived at lunchtime but their flight was delayed.
A. will B. can C. must D. should
33. It is generally accepted that _____ boy must learn to stand up and fight like _____ man.
A. a; a B. a ;the C. the ;the D. a; 不填
34. William found it increasingly difficult to read, for his eyesight was beginning to _____.
A. disappear B. fall C. fail D. damage
35. —Artistic people can be very difficult sometimes.
—Well, you married one _____.
A. You name it B. I've got it C. I can't agree more D. You should know

第二节完形填空（20 小题；每小题 2 分，满分 40 分）

阅读下面短文，从短文后各题所给的四个选项（A、B、C 和 D）中，选出可以填入空白处的最佳选项，并在答题卡上将该项涂黑。

In our discussion with people on how education can help them succeed in life, a woman remembered the first meeting of an introductory 36 course about 20 years ago.

The professor 37 the lecture hall, placed upon his desk a large jar filled with dried beans(豆), and invited the students to 38 how many beans the jar contained. After 39 shouts of wildly wrong guesses the professor smiled a thin, dry smile, announced the 40 answer, and went on saying, "You have just 41 an important lesson about science. That is: Never 42 your own senses"

Twenty years later, the 43 could guess what the professor had in mind. He 44 himself, perhaps, as inviting his students to start an exciting 45 into all unknown world invisible(无形的)to the 46, which can be discovered only through scientific 47. But the seventeen-year-old girl could not accept or even 48 the invitation. She was just 49 to understand the world. And she 50 that her firsthand experience could be the 51. The professor, however, said that it was 52. He was taking away her only 53 for knowing and was providing her with no substitute(替代). "I remember feeling small and 54," the woman says, "and I did the only thing I could do. I 55 the course that afternoon, and I haven't gone near science since. "

36. A. art B. history C. science D. math
37. A. searched for B. looked at C. got through D. marched into
38. A. count B. guess C. report D. watch
39. A. warning B. giving C. turning away D. listening to
40. A. ready B. possible C. correct D. difficult
41. A. learned B. prepared C. taught D. taken
42. A. lose B. trust C. sharpen D. show
43. A. lecturer B. scientist C. speaker D. woman
44. A. described B. respected C. saw D. served
45. A. voyage B. movement C. change D. rush
46. A. professor B. eye C. knowledge D. light

- | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 47. A. model | B. senses | C. spirit | D. methods |
| 48. A. hear | B. make | C. present | D. refuse |
| 49. A. suggesting | B. beginning | C. pretending | D. waiting |
| 50. A. believed | B. doubted | C. proved | D. explained |
| 51. A. growth | B. strength | C. faith | D. truth |
| 52. A. firm | B. interesting | C. wrong | D. acceptable |
| 53. A. task | B. tool | C. success | D. connection |
| 54. A. cruel | B. proud | C. frightened | D. brave |
| 55. A. dropped | B. started | C. passed | D. missed |

第三部分：阅读理解（共 20 小题；每小题 3 分，满分 60 分）

第一节：（共 15 小题，每小题 3 分，满分 45 分）

阅读下列短文，从每题所给的四个选项（A、B、C 和 D）中，选出最佳选项，并在答题卡上将该项涂黑。

When I was a boy growing up in New Jersey in the 1960s, we had a milkman delivering milk to our doorstep. His name was Mr. Basille. He wore a white cap and drove a white truck. As a 5-year-old boy, I couldn't take my eyes off the coin changer fixed to his belt. He noticed this one day during a delivery and gave me a quarter out of his coin changer.

Of course, he delivered more than milk. There was cheese, eggs and so on. If we needed to change our order, my mother would pen a note—"Please add a bottle of buttermilk next delivery"—and place it in the box along with the empty bottles. And then, the buttermilk would magically (魔术般) appear.

All of this was about more than convenience. There existed a close relationship between families and their milkmen. Mr. Basille even had a key to our house, for those times when it was so cold outside that we put the box indoors, so that the milk wouldn't freeze. And I remember Mr. Basille from time to time taking a break at our kitchen table, having a cup of tea and telling stories about his delivery.

There is sadly no home milk delivery today. Big companies allowed the production of cheaper milk thus making it difficult for milkmen to compete (竞争). Besides, milk is for sale everywhere, and it may just not have been practiced to have a delivery service. Recently, an old milk box in the countryside I saw brought back my childhood memories. I took it home and planted it on the back porch (门廊). Every so often my son's friends will ask what it is. So I start telling stories of my boyhood, and of the milkman who brought us friendship along with his milk.

56. Mr. Basille gave the boy a quarter out of his coin changer_____.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. to show his magical power | C. to satisfy his curiosity |
| B. to pay for the delivery | D. to please his mother |

57. What can be inferred from the fact that the milkman had the key to the boy's house?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| A. He wanted to have tea there. | C. He was treated as a family member. |
| B. He was a respectable person. | D. He was fully trusted by the family. |

58. Why does home milk delivery no longer exist?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| A. Nobody wants to be a milkman now. | C. Its service is getting poor. |
| B. It has been driven out of the market. | D. It is forbidden by law. |

59. Why did the author bring back home an old milk box?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| A. He missed the good old days. | C. He needed it for his milk bottles. |
| B. He wanted to tell interesting stories. | D. He planted flowers in it. |

B

While small may be beautiful, tall is just plain uncomfortable it seems, particularly when it comes to staying in hotels and eating in restaurants.

The Tall Persons Club Great Britain(TPCGB.), which was formed six months ago to campaign(发起运动)for the needs of the tall, has turned its attention to hotels and restaurants. Beds that are too small, shower heads that are too low, and restaurant tables with hardly any leg-room all make life difficult for those of above average height it says.

But it is not just the extra-tall whose needs are not being met. The average height of the

B. A Belt-tightening Move

D. Gardening as a Hobby

D

Wanted ,Someone for a Kiss

We're looking for producers to join us on the sound of London Kiss 100 FM. You'll work on the station's music programmes .Music production experience in radio is necessary ,along with rich knowledge of modern dance music. Please apply in writing to Producer Vacancies, Kiss 100.

Father Christmas

We're looking for a very special person, preferably over 40 ,to fill our Father Christmas suit. Working days: Every Saturday from November 24 to December 15 and every day from December 17 to December 24 except Sundays, 10:30-16:00.

Excellent pay.

Please contact(联系) the Enterprise Shopping Centre, Station Parade, Eastbourne.

Accountants Assistant

When you join the team in our Revenue Administration Unit, you will be providing assistance within all parts of the Revenue Division, dealing with post and other general duties. If you are educated to GCSE grade C level we would like to talk to you .This position is equally suitable for a school leaver or for somebody who has office experience.

Wealden District Council

Software Trainer

If you are aged 24-45 and have experience in teaching and training, you could be the person we are looking for. You should be good at the computer and have some experience in programme writing. You will be allowed to make your own decisions, and to design courses as well as present them. Pay upwards of £ 15,000 for the right person. Please apply by sending your CV(简历) to MrsR. Oglivie, Palmalace limited.

67. Who should you get in touch with you hope to work in a radio station?

- A. Producer Vacancies, Kiss 100 C. The Enterprise Shopping Centre
B. Mrs Oglivie, Palmalace Limited D. Wealden District Council

68. We learn from the ads that the Enterprise Shopping Centre needs a person who _____

- A. Is aged between 24 and 40 C. should deal with general duties
B. may do some training work D. can work for about a month

69. Which position is open to recent school graduates?

- A. Producer ,London Kiss B. Father Christmas C. Accountants Assistant D. Software Trainer

70. What kind of person would probably apply to Palmalace Limited?

- A. One with GCSE grade C level
B. One having good computer knowledge.
C. One with some office experience.
D. One trained in producing music programmes

第二节 (共 5 小题, 每小题 3 分, 满分 15 分)

根据短文内容, 从短文后的选项中选出能填入空白处的最佳选项。选项中有两项为多余选项。

Money Matters

Parents should help their children understand money. 71 So you may start talking about money when your child shows an interest in buying things, candy or toys, for example.

1. The basic function of money

Begin explaining the basic function of money by showing how people trade money for goods Or services. It is important to show your child how money is traded for the things he wants to

have.

If he wants to have a toy, give him the money and let him hand the money to the cashier(收银员).
72 _____ When your child grows a bit older and understands the basic function of money, you can start explaining more complex ways of using money.

2. Money lessons

Approach money lessons with openness and honesty. 73 _____ If you must say no to a child's request to spend money, explain, "You have enough toy trucks for now." Or, if the request is for many different things, say, "You have to make a choice between this toy and that toy."

3. 74 _____

Begin at the grocery store. Pick out two similar brands of a product--- a name-brand butter and a generic (无商标产品), for example. You can show your child how to make choices between different brands of a product so that you can save money. 75 _____ If he chooses the cheaper brand, allow him to make another purchase with the money saved. Later, you may explain how the more expensive choice leaves less money for other purchases.

A. Wise decisions B. The value of money C. Permit the child to choose between them.

D. Tell your child why he can --or cannot --- have certain things.

E. Ask yourself what things that cost money are most important to you

F. Talk about how the money bought the thing after you leave the toy store.

G. The best time to teach a child anything about money is when he shows an interest.

第二卷

第四部分：写作（共两节，满分 35 分）

第一节：短文改错（共 10 小题；每小题 1 分，满分 10 分）

假如英语课上老师要求同桌之间交换修改作文，请你修改你同桌的以下作文，文中共有 10 处语言错误，每句中最多有两处。每处错误仅涉及一个单词的增加，删除或修改。

增加：在缺词处加一个漏字符号（□），并在其下面写出该加的词。

删除：把多余的词用斜线（\）划掉。

修改：在错的词下划一横线，并在该词下面写出修改后的词。

注意：1. 每处错误及其修改均仅限一词；

2. 只允许修改 10 处，多者（从第 11 处起）不计分。

My summer travel started terribly. I was at the Shanghai Railway Station buy a Ticket to Hangzhou. I was going to visit a friend here and after that I would go to Xiamen for long holiday. I bought my ticket but turned around to pick up my bag from the floor and then I realized that someone had stolen it. Luckily I had all my Money on my pocket, but the only clothes I had was those I had on. It felt very strange to travel without any luggages. When I finally arrived at my friend he lent to me lots of clothes. I feel very happy that I could change my clothes at last.

第二节：书面表达（满分 25 分）

假定你是李华，正在一所英国学校学习暑期课程，遇到一些困难，希望得到学校辅导中心(Learning Center)的帮助。根据学校规定，你需书面预约，请按下列要点写一封信：

1. 本人简介；

2. 求助内容；

3. 约定时间；

4. 你的联系方式(Email: lihua@1236.com; Phone: 12345678)。

注意：1 词数 100 左右；

2 可以适当增加细节，以使行文连贯；

3 结束语已为你写好。

Dear Sir/Madam,

Look forward to your reply.

Yours,

Li Hua

2011 年新课标高考英语（科）试题 参考答案

A 卷机读答题卡答案（第一、二、三部分，共 75 小题）

I:1-5: CABBA 6-10: CBACB 11-15: CAABC 16-20: CABAC

II:21-25: ADCAC 26-30: BBDAB 31-35: CDACD

III:36-40: CDBDC 41-45: ABDCA 46-50: BDABA 51-55: DCBCA

IV:56-60: CDBAC 61-65: BABAD 66-70: BADCC 71-75:GFDAC

V: (1)短文改错:

My summer travel started terribly. I was at the Shanghai Railway Station buy a
buying
Ticket to Hangzhou. I was going to visit a friend here and after that I would go to
there
Xiamen for a long holiday. I bought my ticket but turned around to pick up my bag
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from the floor and then I realized that someone had stolen it. Luckily I had all my
Money on my pocket, but the only clothes I had was those I had on. It felt very strange
In were
to travel without any luggages. When I finally arrived at my friend he lent to me
luggage friend's
lots of clothes. I feel very happy that I could change my clothes at last.
felt

(2) 书面表达: One possible Version

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm Li Hua, a Chinese student taking summer courses in your university. I'm writing to
ask for help. I came here last month and found my courses interesting. But I have some
difficulties with note-taking and I have no idea of how to use the library. I was told the
Learning Center provides help for students and I'm anxious to get help from you. I have no
class on Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons. Please let me know which day is OK with
you. You may email or phone me. Here are my email address and phone number: lihua @
1236.cin1 12345678.

Look forward to your reply.

Yours,

Li Hua

VITAE

Name Ms. Sujing Wang

Student ID 5311121083

Educational Attainment

Degree	Name of Institution	Year of Graduation
Bachelor of Arts (English)	Henan Normal University	2007