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An Exploration of the Potential Approaches to Lexis-focused College English Teaching and Learning in the 2007 Curriculum: Implications for Teachers

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Abstract

According to the author's long-term observation of College English teaching and learning in Harbin University of Commerce in China, vocabulary accumulation and rote learning made up the repertoire of College English pedagogy and this was also argued by Hird (1995) and many other Chinese ELT researchers (e.g. Yan & Wu, 2002). After 2007, the new syllabus and textbooks have been released and the Internet-based approach to self-directed learning has been put into practice in the on-line course. However, there still seems a distance to the fundamental change of College English teaching and learning. The biggest challenges might lie in the teachers' understanding of these potential innovative approaches proposed in the new syllabus and textbooks and their cognition of the nature of language and learning, so the old questions turn up again: What do we teach? and How do we teach? On the basis of this background, this research puts focus on exploration of potential approaches to lexis-focused College English teaching and learning in the 2007 curriculum and some possible challenges confronting the teachers in aspects of their classroom practice.

The issues to be investigated in this research are mainly involved with the essence of lexis or vocabulary in the College English curriculum and the potential approaches to innovating lexis-focused College English teaching and learning. In order to investigate these issues, two research methods are employed: namely literature review and documentary analysis. The former provides this research with a review of traditional College English pedagogy in China as well as the nature of language and learning from a lexical perspective. The latter tends to meet the answers of research questions via analysis of the syllabus-*College English Curriculum Requirements 2007* and the textbook-*New Horizon College English*.

Throughout the documentary investigation in this research, it is found out that lexis as the basis of language system and lexis teaching and learning as the core of language pedagogy have been stereotyped to underpin the College English curriculum development. Being required in the syllabus document, learner autonomy as a catchall term underpinned with scaffolding and interaction, is emphasized in the new textbook with assistance of an on-line course. In term of textbook analysis, it is also found out that most of the requirements set in the College English syllabus are applied into tasks and activities, in which skill-based learning, lexis-focused learning and autonomous learning are potentially put into focus.

As for the conclusion, based on the potential challenges in front of College English teaching and learning and the findings from the documentary analysis in this research, some implications for the CE teachers are put forward. They are mainly concerned with lexis being the basis of language, the teacher being the learning-instructor and learner autonomy being the final goal of College English pedagogy.

Education Use Consent

I hereby give my permission for this project to be shown to other University of Glasgow students and to be distributed in an electronic form.

Name: Yunlong Zhao   Signature: Yunlong Zhao

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Abbreviations

CE……………………………………………………………………College English

CECR…………………………………………………*College English Curriculum Requirements*

CET……………………………………………………………….College English Test

CLT……………………………………………………….Communicative Language Teaching

EAP………………………………………………………..English for Academic Purpose

EFL………………………………………………………….English as Foreign Language

EGP………………………………………………………….English for General Purpose

ELT………………………………………………………..…English Language Teaching

FLB…………………………………………………...Faculty of Language in a Broad sense

FLN…………………………………………………Faculty of Language in a Narrow sense

HEI…………………………………………………………Higher Education Institution

IRF………………………………………………………...Elicitation Response Feedback

L1………………………………………………………..………First Language

L2………………………………………………………………Second Language

MOE………………………………………………………….……Ministry of Education

NHCE……………………………………………………...….*New Horizon College English*

NNS……………………………………………………………..Non-Native Speaker

NS…………………………………………………………………Native Speaker

SLA………………………………………………………….…..Second Language Acquisition

TBLT………………………………………………………….…Task Based Language Teaching

ZPD……………………………………………………………...Zone of Proximal Development

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In order to meet the increasing demand of English-speaking labor force along with the explosive social and economic development in China as is well known, a new round of College English (CE hereafter) education reform has been started since 2007, in which the lexis-focused approach to teaching and learning becomes a convention in the CE classroom.

Policy makers updated the CE national syllabus, retaining the key learning objectives but adding a new pedagogic model, which is based on the combination of the traditional classroom teaching and the resources of information technology. Instruction of lexical items and development of language skills become the focus and learner autonomy is put in light. CE teachers, following Richards & Rodgers (1985), are authorized at a certain degree to be the decision-makers as well as the final implementers in the classroom. As a response to these changes, a couple of new course-books were designed and published with the content enriched and the tasks diversified. The theoretical system of traditional structure-focused approach is not encouraged and instead the teachers are required to apply a learner-centered approach to the classroom teaching and learning with a purpose of the all-round development of language skills.

In respect to the new trend of CE curriculum development, this research will attempt to explore the potential possibilities to promote the ongoing lexis-focused approach to CE teaching and learning in China. This is based on the analysis of a new national syllabus, the *Curriculum Requirements of College English* (CRCE 2007 hereafter), and samples from a new course-book, *New Horizon College English* (Mach, 2008) (NHCE hereafter), with a hope of bringing some meaningful suggestions to some Chinese CE teachers.

1.2 Main argument and research problems

Harbin University of Commerce is set as a sample context for this research. It is one of the most ordinary universities in China, in which the author has been working for more than 12 years. To some extent this university can be viewed as a representative of all the others because of the common features they share in the CE curriculum development, especially the feature of lexis-focused teaching and learning. This feature is resulted from the influence of many different factors broadly involved with learning culture, curriculum policies, ELT

philosophies and so on. Basically, what it implies is a challenging view of the nature of language and learning.

Since the growing studies of corpus linguistics, a lexis-focused approach to language teaching and learning has been argued by many researchers such as Lewis (1993), Willis (2003), McCarthy (1990), Nunan (1989), Meddinds & Thornbury (2009) and so on. The corpus linguistics is a study of language by using the computer programs to study the characteristic patterns of words in a body of texts totaling several million words. From its start in the early 1970s, this has led to the changes in the way we describe language, for example the way that evidence for dictionary meanings is gathered and the way that we describe language changing. This is known as a phraseological view of language. To put into practice the idea that language can be described as a system of lexical patterns and chunks, as what the researchers mentioned above suggests, vocabulary or lexis learning should not be merely constrained into word attainment or accumulation but should be thought of as an essential natural process to construct and develop the learner's target language system. This has been argued as an approach to improving the learner's overall linguistic proficiency and competence and fostering the improvising of the target language in the real world contexts (Lewis, 1993; Willis, 2003; Nunan, 1989; Nation, 2006). It appears that such an approach is potentially underpinning this new-round reform of CE curriculum.

Applying this approach in the CE classroom is far from a question of 'right' or 'wrong' but related to how we view the target language and carry on the classroom teaching and learning. Regarding the research arguments above, the content of CE instruction should be around the development of lexical knowledge and competence. In addition, Richards and Rodgers (1985) suggest that it seems usual to combine or integrate various methodologies and approaches of language teaching and learning into the textbook. Thereby, under the background of the changes and challenges brought along with this new-round reform of CE curriculum, attention in this research is particularly given to how the target language is dealt with in the syllabus, what potential approaches to lexis teaching and learning are reflected in the textbook, and what implications for the teachers would be met so as to innovate the CE classroom practice.

Based on the discussion of the learning context in China and the target CE learners in a Chinese university as well as the nature of language and learning drawing on the work of the researchers mentioned above such as Lewis (1993), Willis (2003), Nunan (1989), Thornbury (2002, 2004) and the others, the theoretical framework of this research will be constructed. The key research problems to be discussed subsequently are covered in the following questions:

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1. What approaches are to be implemented in the classroom according to analysis of the CECR national syllabus?
2. What does analysis of a College English textbook show are the challenges in potential approaches to teaching lexis in the College English classroom in a Chinese university such as the Harbin University of Commerce?

1.3 The issues for investigation

1.3.1 Enlargement or internalization – Vocabulary learning in the CE classroom

Since the release of the 1986 CE syllabus (http://www.moe.gov.cn.), in order to stimulate the teachers and learners to work harder on their CE teaching and learning, the curriculum administrators adopted a strategy to set a certain degree of English proficiency as a benchmark for graduation. The most convenient way was to use the scores collected from the nationwide CE tests usually abbreviated as the CET, as the parameter to assess the learners' CE proficiency and also the standard to evaluate the quality of CE pedagogy. However, the testing score as graduation benchmark, ever argued as a necessary evil by its supporters, runs in an opposite way and its ultimate effect is only increasing the number of instruction hours and driving students to bury their heads into word memorization (Tang & Absalom, 1998). It is often claimed that the test-oriented graduation benchmark will jeopardize the normal CE instruction and turn the classroom into a cram manufacture chain to reach as large a vocabulary size as possible (Zhou, 1997).

From the author's view, although so many weaknesses of this strategy were found, it is unlikely to make a judgment of whether it is right or wrong to pursue the enlargement of vocabulary size in the CE classroom. At least, attaining a certain amount of vocabulary is a prerequisite for successful comprehension. In language learning literature, this focus on vocabulary size can be traced back to West (1926) who considered 'one unknown word in every fifty words' to be the minimum threshold necessary for the adequate comprehension of a text (cited in Chujo, 2004). Native English-speaking children view a vocabulary load of two unknown words per hundred words (98% lexical coverage) as difficult reading (Carver, 1994). Some other researchers regard one unknown word in every twenty words (95% lexical coverage) as the necessary level, below which readers are not expected to comprehend an authentic text successfully (Laufer, 1989; Read, 2000; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). A limited vocabulary tends to be seen as a major source of difficulty in maintaining 'comprehensible input', which was proposed by Krashen (1985) as an essential approach to language acquisition.

In the near past, additionally, researches have shown that the minimal vocabulary size needed for authentic text reading is at a range from 5,000 to 10,000 words (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1989, 1997). In his recent study, Nation (2006) noted that if 98% lexical coverage of a text is needed for unassisted comprehension, a vocabulary of 8,000 to 9,000 word families is needed for comprehension of written text and a vocabulary of 6,000–7,000 for spoken text. A well-educated adult native speaker of English has a vocabulary of around 17,000 words (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990). As seen from the findings above, the bigger a vocabulary size, the higher the language level is. The size of 5000-6000 words could be treated as a standard to classify the learners' fluency practice of language at intermediate or high level (Thornbury, 2004).

Based on the above literature review of the importance of vocabulary size, it seems unreasonable to attribute the focus on vocabulary enlargement in the CE classroom into a negative effect given by the test-oriented graduation benchmark. But, predictably, in the circumstance of the testing score utilized as the only standard to measure the students' CE proficiency, the students would have to spend more time in word memorization and rote learning.

Vocabulary learnt in this way would inevitably stay at the literal level even if that were also helpful to some extent with textual comprehension. The students would often encounter faults or misunderstandings, because comprehension involves much more than being able to decode the vocabulary in a text. Basically discourse and contextual meanings are the final products (Krashen, 1985). Moreover, the CE curriculum aims to broaden the students' international horizon in order to extend their knowledge of other academic realms without language barriers (Zhou, 1997). Therefore, not only the enlargement of vocabulary size but also the internalization of lexical property should be considered in priority. A rich lexis makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing easier to perform (Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer & Sim, 1985; Qian, 2002).

But what is involved in the process of learning a word?

1.3.2 Nature of lexis learning

'Learning a word' means 'acquire its meanings' (Padden, 1988:34). Meanings are delivered and generated through sentences, which are built up on the property of lexis and grammar. The meanings taken by language 'do more than tell people things and ask them to do things – these meanings also tell people about how we view ourselves and how we view them' (Willis, 2003:57). This indicates that when we take a conversation with other people, we should be

careful of selecting the words and the types of utterance so as to transfer the proper meanings into the context. With respect to Halliday (1975), the crucial thing about language is the capacity to mean or the power to interact with other people in a way of producing the desired outcomes. Therefore, language is a system of meanings, which is normally restricted by form, context and discourse.

As further specified by Halliday (1975), the ability to achieve meanings is related to the ability to make sentences, but they are not the same thing. This is because, at two years old, a child might be able to process a range of meanings, but she/he could hardly utter any complete sentences, which would be thought of as a grammatical one in terms of adult language system. Actually, at the very early stage of a child's language development, she/he communicates with others around merely by putting words together and relies on someone else, the parent, to work out the meaning with assistance of context. There are a number of examples of this from the observation of a child's first language behavior (The author's own observation). For example, if an infant greeted us with a standard and formulaic utterance: '*How-a-ye?*', we'd better not be so surprised as to judge him or her to be a genius, because in an infant's mind, it is not an utterance but most possibly a representative noise with no difference from a single word in adult language. With the enlargement of a child's vocabulary stock, she/he would begin to develop the word combinations gradually. At this stage, the links and differences between structural words like article, preposition and copula, and lexical words like noun, adjective, verb, and adverb may begin to be consciously noticed by a child (Willis, 2007). For example, in the utterance: *Milk is on table*, the definite article '*the*' is lost but the copula is used grammatically. The string of words, in term of lexical class, links lexical behaviors together with patterns and combines word and grammar into an inseparable unit (Li and MacWhinney, 1996). From this perspective, lexical learning is an explicit and conscious process but grammar learning is implicit and unconscious. Additionally, they both construct the formal system of language, which functions as a support to process the meanings in the real world communication.

The sequence of L2 learning is much similar to L1 acquisition in a natural context (Long, 2006). The L2 learning sequence of grammatical words are similar, though not identical to that of L1 acquisition found by Brown (1972), and the biggest differences are only irregular verb forms, articles, copula, and auxiliaries (Dulay et al. 1982). Other similar sequences have been found in syntactic acquisition. 'L2 learners, like L1 learners, start by believing that '*John*' is the subject of *'please'* in both *John is easy to please* and *John is eager to please* and only go on to discover it is the object in *John is easy to please* after some time' (Cook 1973:14). 'L2 learners, like L1 children, at first put negative elements at the beginning of the

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sentence and then progress to negation within the sentence' (Wode, 1981:243). Moreover, it is also found that L2 learners start with sentences without verbs, go on to use verbs without inflexions and finally have sentences with verbs with inflexions (Klein and Perdue 1992, 1997).

This view of the sequence of L2 learning from lexis to grammar, from word to sentence, and from focus on meaning to focus on forms is based on the theories of the influential distinction between compound and coordinate bilinguals made by Weinreich (1968), the transfer approach of Contrastive Analysis (Lado, 1957), the methodology of Error Analysis (Corder 1971; James 1998), or the 'inter-language' derived from the paper by Selinker (1972). Semantics, structure and discourse of a language are constructed on word and grammar, which means lexis as the meaningful unit comes first. That is, the nature of language learning is not of learning lexicalized-grammar but grammaticalized-lexis (Lewis, 1993). It is supposed in this research that to use this viewpoint of language learning as a theoretical basis would enhance the achievement of the revised teaching model in the CECR 2007.

1.4 Brief introduction of CE pedagogic circumstances in China

To better understand the circumstances of lexis teaching and learning in China, the context and culture of language learning would be necessarily taken into accountability and this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

As ever discussed above, the national CE tests have become a kind of benchmark for graduation. For most Chinese undergraduate students, CET band 4 is compulsory while CET band 6 is optional and over all Chinese universities, the tests at these two levels are usually paid most attention. Not only does it reflect the status of the CE curriculum in the Chinese educational system, but also imposes tremendous impact on the CE classroom implementation, a point of which is evidently the focus on vocabulary instruction.

Furthermore, not all Chinese students learn English because of preference or interest but in fact the motivations vary among individual learners (Guo, 2001). They know learning English leads to separate outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000) such as an opportunity to study abroad, a linguistic capital in the benefit of employment and career development, a prerequisite for graduation, and so on, among which the most motivating factor is their desire to pass the examinations (Pan & Block, 2011).

In addition, there are issues to explore, related to the fact that CE textbooks were compiled according to the CECR (1999) before 2004 and the CECR (2007) after that, and both the

curriculum documents and the matching textbooks are deeply influenced by a Chinese stereotypical notion of language learning that language is actually a body of knowledge, the learning process of which is perceived as 'rather like climbing a ladder' (Brick, 1991:47). Although development of communicative competencies is underpinned with a new pedagogic model of combining traditional classroom and information technology in the CECR 2007, the empirical changes in the classroom are still unremarkable.

1.5 Significance of the research problem

   As mentioned above, in China, people's perception of language learning outcomes is usually constrained into how many words the learners kept in memory and how many marking points they achieved. Some researchers (e.g. Tang & Absalom, 1998) attribute this perception to the negative effects of the traditional methods like grammar-translation and rote learning. For example, English is conventionally viewed as a content subject, with no difference from the others such as Biology, Mathematics, Physics and the like; the focus of classroom instruction is on the input of rules and words and the aim is the mastery of language knowledge; the classroom is usually teacher-dominated and the learners play a role of knowledge receptor whose job is only to hear and record what they are taught. In one word, less focus on the development of pragmatic competence and learner autonomy put into shape the lexis-focused instruction and the over-quantified assessment in the CE pedagogy.

   From the author's view, the existence of this perception is mainly due to people's ignorance of the nature of language and learning. Firstly, as mentioned above, vocabulary tends to be the core of CE instructional content, but teachers and learners rarely think of lexis as a complex term involving the redefinition of language and learning, as argued by Lewis (1993) and Willis (2003). For instance, Lewis (1993) stressed that lexis learning should not be oversimplified into mechanical memorization of a word and its equivalent L1 meaning or meanings. Secondly, suggested from the views of the researchers like Willis (2003), Tudor (1992) and many others, the learners should play a role of the 'dominator' of their own learning and the teacher should act more as a 'helper' or 'facilitator' whose main duty is to manage classroom interaction and construct a relatively-low-pressure discourse for the learners. Obviously, for a long time in China, this has not been adequately learnt so that the teacher still plays as a knowledge transmitter and a classroom dominator (Willis, 2003). Last but not least, Tudor (1992) suggests that the development of autonomous learning or learner autonomy is basically the central theme of language learning process, but this has never been addressed in the national syllabi before 2007.

Anyway, from whatever angles we come to view this problematic CE curriculum, the most basic problem lies in what to teach and how to teach. Syllabus is the planning stage of curriculum development, mainly concerned with the content of classroom instruction but the textbook is much more integrative and seems to be a combination of various elements concerned with the classroom pedagogy (Willis, 2003). Through analysis of the potential philosophies underlying the design of CE syllabus and textbook, the classroom content and the potential approaches to CE teaching and learning could be clarified. Thereby, some implications for the teachers can be figured out in order to promote the lexis-focused CE classroom implementation.

1.6 Research methodology

Apparently, the research methodologies in this study are literature review and documentary analysis. Through review and analysis of the existing documents, a framework of the potential approaches to CE teaching and learning is intended so that some possible implications or solutions will be found out and the research questions will be answered. With establishment of a theoretical framework on a description of language and several approaches to teaching and learning, a list of parameters will be set to formulate the analysis. The documentary data will be collected from the latest national syllabus and the sample units from a textbook, known as respectively the CECR 2007 (syllabus) and the NHCE (textbook).

What the author attempts to find in this research is the potential challenges and approaches to CE teaching and learning in a Chinese university. Based on literature review of ELT theories, lexical approach together with interaction, scaffolding, and learner autonomy makes up the underlying theoretical system to guide the documentary analysis of CECR 2007 and NHCE. Reviewing the CE curriculum objectives and the new principles of CE teaching and learning set in CECR 2007, a consistency between the syllabus and the textbook design could be found, since the selection and presentation of language items and the sequence and grading of tasks or activities in NHCE are underpinned with the potential approaches addressed in CECR 2007. This would definitely influence the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. In the meantime, with the analysis of 'what' and 'how', the classroom implementation, ever described by some researchers as the 'dark box' (Zhu, 1992; Zhou, 1997; Zhang, 2002), might be slightly revealed and the challenges confronting the teachers and learners in the classroom would be spotted.

1.7 Research limitation

No research covers everything. The most outstanding limitation of this research is that both of the data collection and analysis are constructed merely at the theoretical and documentary level, so, definitely, some certain distinctions between the real scene of CE classes and the conclusions from this thesis would be inevitable.

The new syllabus and textbook reflect the potential trend of CE curriculum development. Through the analysis of these documents, this trend would be more or less clarified. The requirements in the new curriculum document or syllabus put lexically based learning and four-skill development in the central light of CE classroom pedagogy, the approach to which is the cultivation of learner autonomy. Moreover, the textbook particularizes the tasks and strategies of CE classroom teaching and learning in correspondence with the requirements. This trend actually involves a basic change from the previous grammar-and translation-focused classroom pedagogy into the lexis-and autonomy-focused. Therefore, the possible conclusions drawn from this research would be more related to the potential possibilities to innovate the CE curriculum implementation than to the current empirical circumstances in the CE classroom.

Obviously, this kind of innovation would bring a number of challenges to the CE teachers and learners, but, in reverse, the teachers and learners would make the innovation confronted with challenges as well, because this innovation is eventually determined by their understanding and practicing of the updated notion of the nature of language and learning from the lexical perspective. The factors concerned with what the teachers think, how the teachers teach, what the learners think and how the learners learn in the CE classroom are closely related to the success of this new round reform of CE curriculum. This implies that what is viewed from the syllabus and textbook might be one thing, but the real scene of CE classroom practice might be another. Data in this aspect would mainly be collected from empirical observations, interviews and questionnaires, which is out of the scale of this research and forms the most significant limitation.

Chapter 2   Research Background: history, culture, policy and challenge

2.1 Brief introduction of the CE-teaching history in China

CE education in China can be traced back to Qing Dynasty and has nearly a history of 140 years (Fu, 1986). In the early 19th century, many missionaries from Europe – France and UK mainly, were sent to the coastal cities of China to carry out mission work and started a form of linguistic and cultural invasion under the background of explosive expansion of colonialism and capitalism. Not until the Opium War in 1840 did the central government of Qing Empire start to perceive that China had never been the world center and advanced military and technology could break up any King's dream. English language began to be meaningful in various domains of this country and for the first time in Chinese history a non-native language education was placed on the national agenda of the government authorities. English language was seen as the major media to learn from the West. This could be demonstrated from 'Yang Wu Yun Dong', which meaning is close to 'the movement of learning from the West', proposed and pushed by Li Hongzhang, the Foreign Minister of Qing Empire in around the 1890s.

A large number of elite was sent to the Western countries, particularly the United Kingdom, to study the advanced science and technology derived from the Industrial Revolution. They brought the necessary knowledge and technology back to this country and refreshed people's notions of education at that time in China as well. Therefore, the initial power to trigger the development of CE curriculum was the external pressure from the domains of economy, politics and culture and the ultimate goal of it was to thoroughly terminate the weak image and the poverty of China via the consistent input and intake of modern science and technology from the West.

2.2 Learning culture in China

In terminology, learning culture in China is a whole set of expectations, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, preferences, experiences, and behaviors with regard to teaching and learning in Chinese society. Although it is not precise to generalize these complex factors into Chinese style, as Cortazzi and Jin (1996) contend, some cultural assumptions of educational practice are typically rooted in Chinese society. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these assumptions are often taken for granted to underpin Chinese modes of foreign language teaching and learning.

First of all, Chinese assumptions of education have been much influenced by Confucian thinking (Biggs, 1996b; Lee, 1996). A deep reverence is paid for education. Confucius attached great importance to education and thought of it to be the only way to turn a person from ordinary into superior and a country from weak into strong (Guo, 2001; Zhu, 1992). Underlying this philosophy, it has been internalized in Chinese society that education (mainly refers to school education) is the unique channel to success (Cheng, 2000). As a result, the utilitarian function of education to bring along social recognition and material rewards (Lee, 1996; Llasera, 1987; Zhu, 1992) is highlighted but the reward of the soul that comes in the form of inner satisfaction with personal development (Guo, 2001) is put in the lower position. This indicates that most CE learners are motivated by the extrinsic needs, for example, the opportunity to have better employment or better education. Furthermore, this utilitarian view of education deeply influences people's recognition of the examination. Examination is not merely perceived as the most convenient way to certify the quality of school learning, but is usually compared to be a battle. The students are the soldiers and to achieve the higher testing score becomes their ultimate mission. This explains why the test results are so much emphasized by parents and students in China and why the CE course is labeled with exam-orientation.

Secondly, education is traditionally viewed as a process of accumulating knowledge rather than a practical process of constructing and using knowledge for immediate purposes. Like saving money in the bank and spending it later, 'when you put your money in the bank it is not important to be sure what you are going to do with it; but when you do need the money for some emergency, it is there for you to use' (Yu, 1984:30).

Another feature of Chinese education is its conception of the source of knowledge. Knowledge input is equated to book reading. Chinese people tend to associate games and communicative activities in class with entertainment exclusively and are skeptical of their use as learning tools (Rao, 1996; Leng, 1997). The point of classroom teaching and learning is to maintain not a hierarchical but a harmonious relationship between the teacher and the students, which means the students are supposed not to challenge but to obey the teacher in the class.

Last but not least, in Chinese culture, development of competencies is not considered to be an immutable attribute of learning as it is in the Western cultures (Cheng, 1992). 'Ability is perceived as more controllable and can be increased through hard work' (Salili, 1996:85). What matters is determination and steadfastness of purpose, effort, perseverance, and patience (Biggs, 1996a; Lee, 1996; Ross, 1993). As Cheng points out, 'the motto: diligence compensates for stupidity' is seldom challenged (1992:33).

All in all, the traditional Chinese model of teaching is an 'empty-vessel' (Allen &Spada, 1982) or a 'pint-pot' (Maley, 1982), which is essentially 'mimetic' or 'epistemic', in that it is characterized by the transmission of knowledge principally through an imitative and repetitive process (Paine, 1992; Tang & Absalom, 1998). Teaching methods are largely expository and the teaching process is teacher-dominated (Biggs, 1996b). The rationale behind this is that 'learners must first master the basics and only when this is accomplished are they in a position to use what they have mastered in a creative manner' (Brick, 1991:87). Therefore, the focus of teaching and learning is not on how teachers and students can create, construct, and apply knowledge in an experimental approach but to what extent authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalized in an effective and efficient way (Brick, 1991; Jin & Cortazzi, 1995; Paine & DeLany, 2000).

2.3 Development of CE curriculum policies in China

Since the very beginning of its development, CE education has been stamped with a political mark to meet the perceived needs of the government.

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, with regards to the so-called construction and development of socialism and industrialism, the central government called for the whole nation to learn from the Soviet Union. Russian language became dominant in foreign language education in Mainland China. In late 1956s, there remained only 9 HEIs, which were focused on CE education and totally 2500 CE major students plus 545 professional teachers in the whole country (Fu, 1986). The most disastrous destruction of CE education happened in the Cultural Revolution from 1960s to 1970s and during this 10 years' nationwide chaos, CE teaching and learning was announced to be illegal and the violators would be imprisoned in the name of counter-socialists or spies. The fame of an evil weapon of Western Imperialism and Capitalism was attached to English language by the government.

A historic change of CE education came after Deng Xiaoping's 'Reform and Open' policy in 1979. With the rapid development of foreign trade and international cooperation, the graduates' low-level English proficiency became a serious problem in foreign communications so CE education regained its legitimacy and celebrated its prosperous spring. Since the 1980s, CE has become a compulsory subject in all HEIs. But, the 1980 national syllabus is like a political policy of 'back to English' rather than a carefully designed curriculum document. Its aim was to 'provide students with the capability to gain some information in English' (cited from CECR, 1999).

In May of the year 1985, the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party issued a document: *Decision on the Reform of Educational System* (http://gov.hnedu.cn/web/0/200506/21115244281.html). It announced a series of official decisions like to enhance the foreign exchange, to learn the experience in education from the West, to update the system of curriculum administration and so on. The immediate response to this document was a plan of CE Curriculum development applied to the undergraduates in science and engineering in 1985. Soon after, a new CE national syllabus was issued in 1986, mainly applied to the undergraduates in humanities. A comparison between the 1985 and 1986 syllabi can be found in the website: http://www.moe.gov.cn. It needs to be pointed out that the 1985/86 syllabi have required the integrative development of four macro skills and proposed a student-centered approach. In spite of just being stated briefly and lack of the practical meaning, this made them rather different from the 1980 policy. However, there found nothing changed after the issue of the 1985/1986 syllabi and the empirical classroom implementation was still underpinned with the teacher-centered approach and Grammar-Translation methodology. The teachers were unprepared and found it easier to fall back on the methods they had been using for a long time (Klapper, 2001).

In the 1990s, the Ministry of Education (MOE hereafter) issued a new document in order to intensify the CE curriculum reform. Along with this, four dimensions of CE curriculum development, namely aims, objectives, methodologies and vocabulary size, were adapted. The first obvious change lay in the aims of CE curriculum. As figured out by Huang (1999), this change referred to from the one-way language input in the1980 policy to the two-way communication in the 1999 syllabus. Secondly, there was also a shift of the objectives from the focus on reading-skill development and vocabulary accumulation to the focus on integrative development of four macro skills and lexical competence. Thirdly, the student-centeredness was given more emphasis and required to systematically replace the teacher-centeredness in the CE classroom. Meanwhile, the requirement of vocabulary size was upgraded remarkably from 500 (set in the 1980 policy) to 6,500 words and phrases that are used at high frequency in the daily life of English speaking countries.

Regarding the 1999 syllabus, Lu (2001) argued that it is theoretically a combination of several types of syllabi as it is centered on lexis, situations and functions. According to Long (1992), Nunan (1988) and the others, these are the significant features of the product syllabi. Unfortunately, it did not lead to the satisfactory results, which could be reflected from the questioning raised by more and more people nowadays: Does the CE curriculum meet the needs of the learners in China? According to Zhang (2002) and Yan and Wu. (2002), there are

still a lot of places to be improved, more or less in correspondence with the requirements in the 1999 syllabus as followed:

➢ To remove elements incompatible with modern ideas of education, update the teaching content, reform teaching methodologies, improve classroom equipment, and set up a new evaluation system;

➢ To catch up with the advanced educational thoughts and open mind to the new perceptions of CE curriculum development;

➢ To put the new theories and findings, involving SLA, cognitive approach, learning strategy and so on, into the empirical implementation;

➢ To completely abandon those obsolete notions of CE teaching and learning, e.g. separately and explicitly instructing grammar and vocabulary;

➢ To provide students with an access to the development of creative and practical capability in CE learning, e.g. the student-centered classroom;

➢ To let students be conscious of the importance of cultural diversity and the meaning of respecting other nations;

➢ To create conditions for full individual development and lay a good foundation for lifelong learning (Cited from the CECR 1999, http://www.moe.gov.cn).

In order to fulfill these requirements, Tudor (1992) recommended that the teacher must facilitate the students' learning: for example, to enhance their confidence to overcome obstacles; to correct their learning habits and strategies; to encourage them to plan and manage their self-directed learning. Also, the teachers may have to help the students to develop the cognitive skills such as observation, memorization, replication, internalization and so on. As far as the linguistic goals are concerned, in addition, the teachers must push the students to master the basic linguistic knowledge and skills so as to use English to catch the necessary information textually and aurally and establish a foundation for the more complicated communication in the genuine social context.

The higher requirements set the higher demands of the CE teacher's pedagogic knowledge and skills and once more, switch the question from what we teach to how we teach (Salili, 1996). 'The classroom is the meeting point of various subjective views of language, diverse learning purposes, and different preferences concerning how learning should be done' (Breen, 1984:78). 'We realized that heterogeneity is the natural result when many minds trying to come to grips with an idea through dialogue. Given the uniqueness of our learners (and of human beings in general) any expectation of homogeneity would be unreasonable' (Naidu et al., 1992:257). Thereby, the cultivation of self-directed learning abilities or learner autonomy might be a tendency of the CE curriculum development at the next stage.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a new round of reform was started along with the issue of the CECR 2007 by the MOE. Its major objectives are to overall develop the students' skills of language reception and production, promote their lexical knowledge and competence and cultivate their autonomous learning abilities. According to the document of CECR 2007, English language is no longer viewed as an interlocking set of grammatical, lexical, and phonetic rules, but as a tool of meaning expression (Willis, 2003). This re-conceptualization of language would have an intense impact on the CE classroom implementation, specifically the lexis teaching and learning.

From all above discussions in this section, not only is the developmental history of the CE curriculum policies presented, but it is also clarified that the stakeholders' views of the nature of language and learning were consistently updated throughout the entire history after the foundation of the PRC. The here-mentioned stakeholders mainly refer to the educational authorities or the policy makers because, as clearly seen in this section, every evolution of the CE curriculum development was switched on by the government hand and the powerful curriculum policies straightly determined the course-book design and disciplined the classroom teaching and learning.

2.4 Challenges to the CE classroom in China

 2.4.1 Potential challenges from the learners

Being relevant to the evaluation of the CECR 2007, a survey was carried out by Cortazzi & Jin (1996), using the interviews and the open-ended questionnaires to gauge what qualities Chinese university students look for in a good teacher. The first quality, cited by two thirds of respondents, was knowledge; the next quality, involving the teacher's personalities and attitudes (patience, humor, morality, friendliness), was cited by a little more than 20% of respondents. 'Using effective teaching methods' was ranked ninth out of eleven (16%), and 'explaining things clearly' came to the bottom, with only 6.7% of respondents citing this. The qualities of a good learner that the students valued were likely to be a mirror image of what they valued in their teachers as well. The first quality was hard work, cited by 43% of respondents. The second was sociability or peer learning ability at 18.5%. The next three were all concerned with personal attitudes and behaviors in the classroom: respect, cooperation and attention. The independent learning came with 11.1%, but questioning in the class came with only 6.6% at the last place (Cortazzi & Jin 1996).

According to this survey, asking questions was likely seen as having a number of potentially negative results. It may lead to a loss of face if the question is too simple or

irrelevant or the implied criticism from the teacher, who should have preempted the relevant questions if s/he had prepared the lesson properly (Lantolf, 2000b). It may also be thought of as wasting the valuable class time of the fellow students (Leeman, 2003). Thus, the preferred strategy is to puzzle the questions out oneself, but if unable to do so, the students would like to seek the teacher out of class time, where potential negative consequences are minimized in a one to one situation (MacWhinney, 2001). In accordance with Cortazzi & Jin's conclusion out of the survey in 1996, Chinese students collaborate naturally and spontaneously out of the class, but are not comfortable with group work in the class, where they feel work should be mediated through the teacher and where there is the great potential for loss of face to make errors in front of the group (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Therefore, it is easily understood why vocabulary and grammar have been consistently the focus of instructional content and text-based learning has been a principal means of language input. Given the traditional learning culture in China as discussed in the first section of this Chapter, the enrichment of vocabulary and grammar through a large quantity of reading is broadly acknowledged to cater for the input of language knowledge and thereby foster the language acquisition. That is, the students are usually exposed to the target language through the silent reading but not the verbal interaction and communication. Moreover, according to the discussion in this section, this seems a mutual-benefit to both the teacher and the students because of the avoidance of face-loss in the classroom and as a matter of fact, it is the whole repertoire of Chinese students' CE learning.

2.4.2 Teaching methodologies

According to the research carried out by Wei (2001), the quality of CE pedagogy in China has not reached the public expectations yet. A great majority of students only have some fragmentary knowledge of English language. They can only recognize about 1,800 words, and are very weak in four macro language skills. Multiple causes of the low quality were suggested including the outdated curriculums, the rigid teaching methods, the shortage of qualified teachers, and the examination-oriented instruction (Wei, 2001).

As a result of this, the MOE started to update the CE curricula for various levels and organized the production of new syllabi and textbooks. The innovation of teaching methodologies was encouraged by allowing some culturally and economically advanced cities or regions to produce the localized syllabi and textbooks. The recruitment of the foreign ELT specialists in some teacher-training programs was significantly increased (Wei, 2001). Meanwhile, more and more Chinese CE teachers and linguistic researchers were sent to the Western universities to study the theories of Applied Linguistics. Thanks to these efforts,

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT hereafter) and Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT hereafter) were introduced into China and adapted to the special Chinese cultural environment (Wei, 2001).

The re-entry of China into the international educational scene marked a new level of the engagement between Chinese students and the Western educational practice. CLT was initially introduced into China in the early 1990s as a new ELT approach to addressing the problem of the traditional text-driven teaching method that produces no English speakers but rather English readers (Fan, 1999). CLT views language as a tool for communication and insists on the interactive speaking activities in the classroom to be the instances of real communication (Hamers & Blanc, 1989). It assumes it essential for students to have sufficient exposure to the target language. Since its emergence, various models of CLT have deeply influenced EFL education in the West and it has been even assumed by some to be the only 'right' way to teach a foreign language. However, doubts are increasing because of its tendency to neglect of such features as the function of form-focused instruction and the teacher's role as an instructor (Ellis, 2004). In some areas, it is being replaced by the newly developed TBLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), which emphasizes the function of tasks in language learning, the development of learner autonomy, the role of the teacher as a learning instructor but not a language interpreter, and the importance of classroom interaction (Ellis, 2004). The theories concerned with these will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

However, this type of change did not make a success in China and it would be more true to say that both CLT and TBLT found it hard to survive in the Chinese environment (Jin &Cortazzi, 1995). In fact, from the very start, CLT and TBLT have suffered from a strong resistance. Because these approaches are new in every way in contrast to what the CE teachers are used to, the old grammar-translation method is still broadly used in the CE classroom. As well, the teachers have little confidence to teach communicatively in the grammar-focused and examination-oriented classroom atmosphere. 'Many teachers have tried to change the dominant teaching procedures but quickly get frustrated, lose their initial enthusiasm, and acquiesce to tradition' (Campbell and Zhao, 1993:5).

Writing in 1995, Hird argued that ELT in China was 'not very communicative' because everything in education is under the control of the government. The MOE makes curriculum policies and determines goals, syllabi, course-books, and even teaching methods of the empirical classroom implementation. As Campbell and Zhao (1993) further observed, 'the highly centralized Chinese system of education subverts the development of more effective methods of teaching English in a number of ways, particularly in the ways foreign language

teachers are selected and trained, materials and methods are chosen, and programs and teachers are evaluated'.

Similarly, as early as 1989, Burnaby and Sun reported that CLT was inappropriate for the needs of most Chinese students, and difficult to implement within the Chinese context, despite the optimistic attitudes held by some Chinese teachers. But, even these teachers also expressed a strong desire for the assistance from more experts in ELT/EFL with curriculum development and testing methods (Burnaby and Sun, 1989).

In the author's mind, the process of CE teaching and learning in China could be probably covered with four words: sequentially certainty, memorization, silence and mastery. Certainty refers to knowing a piecemeal of knowledge or intolerance of ambiguity. Biggs (1996) speculates that the convention of learning a language from point to domain could be attributed to the nature of reading in Chinese. Acquiring thousands of Chinese characters and their multilayered pragmatic meanings seems enough to comprehend all types of texts to the full (Parry, 1996; Scovel, 1983; Zhang, 1983). Memorization is a learning strategy most valued by the Chinese learners (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; Du, 1997; Ng & Tang, 1997; Zhu, 1997), but it should be distinguished from the rote learning, a stereotypical image mistaken by many researchers (Biggs, 1996; Marton, et.al., 1996). Chinese students do not rote-learn more often than the Western students (Biggs, 1996, 1996b; Goh & Kwah, 1997; Lin, 1999; Ma, 1999). Students are not encouraged to engage in mechanical memorization (Zhou, 1997), but, instead, they are pushed to carry out memorization with understanding –that is, to memorize what is understood or to understand through memorization (Lee, 1996; Marton et.al, 1996; Yu, 1984). Just because of the emphasis of memorization, silence other than verbal action in the classroom is encouraged and valued (Jin & Cortazzi, 1995). Finally language use would never be taken into account in the classroom until the full mastery of language items was achieved. This can be argued to be incompatible with EFL pedagogical practices that advocate the integrative approaches to learning, downplay the role of mechanic memorization, stress verbal interaction at the expense of inner action and encourage speculation and tolerance of ambiguity (Biggs, 1996; Goh & Kwah, 1997; Lin, 1999; Ma, 1999).

2.4.3 Geo-distinction between the CE learners

To precipitate the economic development in China, the rare educational resources, like teachers, materials, facilities and so on, have been concentrated into the large cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and the fast developing eastern coastal areas (Postiglione, 1992). This trend is still going on and accelerating the economic development there. The rapid economic growth has attracted a flood of foreign companies and overseas tourists along with cultural,

commercial and technological input. These changes have caused a growing demand of the high-quality labor force that is proficient in English and thus English-as-lingua-franca has gradually become a necessary working language. This awareness is continuously escalating. English proficiency is viewed as a prerequisite for admission to higher education as well as for lucrative career development after graduation (Hertling, 1996).

On the other side, in the areas of low-level development, the need for the English-speaking labor force is not urgent. Application of EFL is merely constrained into the domains of classroom and examination (Zhao & Campbell, 1995). Students learn English mainly in order to secure a place in a HEI (Fan, 1999). Few of them can insist on their EFL learning to the end of success for it is not a necessity for them to do so with difference from the students in the larger cities (Paine & DeLany, 2000; Postiglione, 1992). Unfortunately, such students take up approximately 70% of the total population of CE students in China (Zhang, 2002).

Urban students have more exposure to EFL outside classroom. English books, newspapers, magazines, TV programs, videos, movies and Internet access are readily available (British Council, 1995; Zhao & Campbell, 1995). In these contexts, it is not infrequent to run into native speakers (McKay & Ferguson, 2000). These opportunities to use English for communicative and recreational purposes have not only built up a relatively conducive learning environment but also contributed to the development of their communicative competence in English. However, such use of EFL outside school settings is largely missing in the underdeveloped areas (McKay & Ferguson, 2000). In contrast with the economic boom in large cities and coastal areas, there are fewer opportunities of employment in these areas so more pressure is put on the students to compete in various national EFL tests in order to have a chance to study and work in modern cities. This makes their EFL learning much exam-oriented.

As a result, when a large number of students from various areas of China with different needs of CE learning turn up in the classroom, the challenges confronting the teacher would be unimaginable and the CE classroom implementation would not be termed as happy celebration.

2.4.4 Learning environment

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg and much more obstacles are in front of CE curriculum development in China. Among them, four elements in the CE learning environment are typically outstanding.

The first one is the deficiency of socio-cultural knowledge of English speaking countries in the teacher's knowledge system (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Leng, 1997; Liu, 1998). This indicates that the teacher seems unable to help the students to cultivate their sociolinguistic competence, which mainly refers to the ability to use appropriate language for the context of communication and is proposed as an essential component of communicative competence (Swain, 2000).

The second is the class size. With the Harbin University of Commerce as a sample, the average number of students in one class is more than 60. That is to say, the communicative tasks and activities could hardly be carried on since they are more suitable to a small group (Leng, 1997; Liu, 1998; Ng & Tang, 1997).

The third is the insufficient time for instruction (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Liu, 1998; Ng & Tang, 1997). Most CE teachers decide to avoid or skip some time-consuming interactive tasks in the classroom, in compliance with the pressure from the school authorities to cover a large amount of preset instructional content in the classroom.

The last element is the national CE Tests as mentioned in Chapter 1. Till now, the debates on the wash-back effects of these tests have never been stopped in the Chinese ELT circle. The tests have even been labeled with an original sin for the low quality of CE education (Leng, 1997; Lewin & Wang, 1991; Rao, 1996; Xiao, 1998).

As a result from the longstanding emphasis on the 'paramount' test effects on the CE curriculum development and in addition of the other challenging elements in the learning environment, many researchers (Hertling, 1996; Liao, 2001; Liu, 1998; Lin, 1999) even claimed that there was no glimpse of hope to start any sorts of innovation of CE classroom teaching and learning in China. The accumulation of discrete word-and-rule knowledge has become a norm in the CE classroom.

2.4.5 Teacher training

Another important challenge that has to be mentioned here is the teacher-training program in China. Researchers (Adamson, 1995; Paine, 1992; Sharpe & Ning, 1998) have identified a number of problems in this domain, two of which are especially disturbing.

The first one is the methodologies adopted in the training courses. Activities like group discussions, oral presentations and microteaching programs are rarely implemented. The predominant approach is teacher-centered and lecture-based and the content is oriented towards the textual analysis and form-focused instruction. Such practices would

subconsciously socialize the trainee teachers into a traditional pedagogical model, which is incompatible with the new interactive student-centered trend of classroom teaching development. As Xiao (1998:28) points out, 'when some of the students who have been taught with a traditional method turn out to be the EFL teachers, they are most likely to use the same method in their teaching'.

The second is the low level of their English proficiency and linguistic knowledge required by their future teaching jobs. The need to raise the trainee teachers' EFL knowledge and skills is reinforced by the low-quality enrollment in the normal universities in China (Adamson, 1995; Paine, 1992). The teacher is the terminal classroom implementer (Richards & Rodgers, 1985; 2001) as means that she/he is powerful enough to determine the management of classroom discourse and the development of students' linguistic, interactive and communicative competences. If the teachers' mastery of language fluency and accuracy were at a low level, the students would very possibly have more sufferings in the learning process.

2.5 Summary

Under the challenges from the traditional learning culture, diverse learner needs, exam-oriented instruction and the low language proficiency of the teacher, it seems to be very difficult to find out any potential approaches to innovating the ongoing lexis teaching and learning at the tertiary level in China. Fortunately, however, the good news is that these CE tests have undergone some changes (Pan & Block, 2011) like to raise the weight of listening, to add speaking as an optional sub-test, to delete the discrete assessment of grammatical knowledge and so on. As well, the newly designed CECR 2007 and NHCE proposed some feasible approaches to innovating the quality of CE classroom teaching and learning, which will be specifically analyzed in Chapter 5 and 6. These are all the optimistic signals and expected to have some positive effects on the CE classroom practice.

Chapter 3   Literature Review

3.1 The nature of language

A predominant view of language in some linguistic circles was that vocabulary is subservient to grammar (Thornbury, 2002). Most linguists preferred to lay emphasis on structures rather than words. Due to Chomskyan influence, they insisted that language acquisition is dependent on the mastery of grammatical rules but vocabulary is only of secondary importance.

For supporting this viewpoint of language, they turn to Darwinism for the testable evidences and begin to study the evolution of language from the biological perspective. For example, Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch (2002) drew a conceptual distinction between FLN (the faculty of language in a narrow sense), which refers to the aspects of language that are unique to it, and FLB (the faculty of language in a broad sense), which refers to the aspects of language shared by other faculties or other organisms. In turn they proffered the empirical hypothesis that 'FLN comprises only the core of computational mechanisms of recursion as they appear in narrow syntax and the mappings of interfaces'. This drew an implication for the evolution of language: if it is only recursion that 'is recently involved', that would 'nullify' the argument from design (Pinker and Bloom, 1990; Pinker, 2003; Jackendoff, 1992, 2002), which proposes that many aspects of language have recently evolved by natural selection for enhanced communication.

In the case of language evolution, Jackendoff (2002) considered the possible orderings of the lexicon and syntax and supposed that what evolved first was a capacity to communicate symbolically with words, but without any syntactic connections among words, only concatenation. Regarding this view, it would be plausible that the capacity for syntactic structure evolved as an adaptive means of making the communication more informative and efficient (Jackendoff, 1990b, 2002; Newmeyer, 1990; Pinker and Bloom, 1990).

In fact, as early as the year 1976, Wilkins similarly stated, 'without grammar very little can be conveyed', but 'without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed' (Wilkins, 1976: 35). Sinclair also agrees with Wilkins' view and points out: 'a lexical mistake often causes misunderstanding, while a grammar mistake rarely does' (2000: 200). As for this dissertation, the potential approaches to lexis-focused teaching and learning make up the central theme. The author tends to believe that the notion of lexis coming in priority would evidently refresh the potential philosophies underpinning the CE teaching and learning.

3.1.1 Language as a grammaticalized lexical system

Along with the continuous findings and arguments against Chomskyan theories such as the above mentioned, the research interest is being attracted to the lexical functions in language acquisition particularly after the emergence of Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993). In the advocacy of the importance of lexis in language learning, Lewis stressed the following major areas: lexis is the basis of language; lexis is misunderstood in language teaching because of the assumption that grammar is the basis of language and that mastery of grammatical system is a prerequisite for effective communication; one of the central organizing principles of any meaning-centered syllabus should be lexis; the key principle of lexical approach is that language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar (1993). According to Lewis (1993, 1997), language is made of lexical elements besides grammar and the research emphasis should be laid on the structures made of words, word clusters and lexical chunks rather than grammatical items.

Lewis (1993) further argues that every word has its own grammar and it is not possible to create a distinction between grammar and vocabulary. A number of studies (such as Altenberg, 1998; Erman, 2001; Kjellmer, Pawley and Syder, 1983) showed that even to a native speaker's output, the notion of creative utterances being constructed on the awareness of grammatical rules is at best a half-truth. In fact, it is the prefabrication in form of a significant part of the native speaker's output. This can account for what Pawley and Syder (1983) called, the puzzle of native-like selection: a native speaker's utterances are both 'grammatical' and 'native-like'. Although only a small proportion of grammatically well-formed sentences are native-like and readily acceptable to native informants as ordinary natural forms of expression (Pawley & Syder, 1983), nearly all the sentences that the native speakers create are composed of prefabricated items. It would seem that the speakers need both a prefabricated and automatized element to draw on as well as a creative and generative one – both 'idiom' and 'open choice' components. Once the value of the prefabricated is acknowledged, the traditional distinction between grammar and vocabulary becomes difficult.

Based on all above discussed in this section, especially Lewis' (1993, 1997) arguments of the nature of language, the dichotomy of grammar and lexis should be terminated since language itself is basically a lexical system, in which lexis is grammar and rules sub-serve meanings. In order to make it further clarified, the following factors should be taken into account, such as the conceptual distinctions between lexis and vocabulary, the new versions of lexical chunks and the meaning of these versions to the L2 classroom.

At first, though the terms lexis and vocabulary are often thought of as synonyms, their differences still exist. Lewis (1997) stated that lexis refers to strings of words, which go together. Specifically, he explained, 'lexis is a more general word than vocabulary. Vocabulary is often used to talk of the individual words of language. Lexis covers single words and multi-word objects, which have the same status in the language as simple words, the items we store in our mental lexicons ready for use' (1997:89). 'Lexis includes not only the single words but also the word combinations' (Lewis, 2002:35).

Lewis (1997:47) suggests the following taxonomy of lexical items:

1. Words (e.g. book, pen);

2. Poly words (e.g. by the way, upside down);

3. Collocations or word partnerships (e.g. community service, absolutely convinced);

4. Institutionalized utterances (e.g. I'll see it, We'll see, That will do, etc.);

5. Sentence frames and heads (e.g. That is not as … as you think, The fact/suggestion/problem was… etc.) and even text frames (e.g. In this paper we explore…, Firstly,…Secondly,…Finally,…etc.).

According to Lewis (1997), special attention should be directed to collocations and expressions that include institutionalized utterances and sentence frames and heads. He maintains, 'instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions. Rather than trying to break things into ever-smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic, ways' (1997:204). Instead of viewing language simply as words and rules, he suggests that language should be viewed as consisting of multi-word chunks (Lewis, 1997). Nattinger and De Carrico also consider a 'lexical phrase or a chunk as a lexico-grammatical unit which exists somewhere between traditional poles of lexicon and syntax' (1992:57). Thornbury substantiates this view: 'lexis challenges the traditional view that language competence consists of having a foundation of grammatical structures into which we slot individual words. Instead, we store a huge assortment of memorized words, phrases and collocations, along with their associated 'grammar'' (2002: 197).

Accordingly, at the second place, the nature of language should be termed as a system of lexical chunks. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) label the lexical chunks as lexical phrases. They describe lexical phrases as 'chunks' of language of varying length, and each is associated with a particular discourse function. According to this definition, lexical phrases

have not only syntactic structure, but also functional meanings. On the other hand, Wray's definition of lexical chunks is: 'a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated; that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar' (Wray, 2000:478). This definition expresses the basic characteristic of lexical chunks that is fixedness and semi-fixedness, which means that lexical chunks can be stored and retrieved automatically as a whole unit in the process of language acquisition.

In other words, the ability to use lexical chunks in speech would enhance both fluency and efficiency. 'This prefabricated speech has both the advantage of more efficient retrieval and of permitting speakers (and hearers) to direct their attention to the larger structure of the discourse, rather than keeping it focused narrowly on individual words as they are produced' (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992:57). Lewis (1993) also points out that a large proportion of languages consist of meaningful chunks, which can be found in the utterances of native speakers who employ a large number of pre-assembled chunks to produce fluency and accuracy.

Last but not least, these evolutionary versions of lexical chunks are meaningful to the innovation of L2 classroom teaching and learning. Cowie and Howarth (1996) compared NS (native speaker) and NNS (non-native speaker) writing, though, without controlling the language background of the L2 writers. In order to prove the hypothesis that there might be a measurable overlap in collocation use between less proficient NS and more advanced NNS writers, they concentrated on the collocations displayed in the academic essays of relatively advanced NNS writers and NS undergraduates. Through comparison, they found that the overlap indeed exists, in terms of the proportion of collocations used of a given grammatical pattern (V. + N.). Therefore, they come to the conclusion that lexical chunks are a significant component of non-native speakers' language proficiency. As well, Granger (1998:145) probed into non-native speakers' academic essays and claimed that 'learners use fewer lexical chunks than their native-speaker counterparts, and they have less sensitivity to the collocation relationships'. It turns out that lower and intermediate learners grasp and use much fewer lexical chunks than native speakers.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the awareness of lexis or particularly lexical chunks is of significance to the proficiency of L2 learners. The more advanced the learners are, the more capable they are likely to be in identifying and utilizing lexical chunks or collocations. From this angle, in brief, the lexical competence seems to be in equivalence with the linguistic competence to some extent and lexis should be applied into the L2 classroom not only as the content but also as an approach to teaching and learning.

3.1.2 Lexical approach to language learning

Since publication of *Lexical Syllabus* (Willis, 1990) and *Lexical Approach* （Lewis, 1993）, the interest has been aroused in the principles of the lexical approach. Lewis' lexical approach concentrates on students' improvement of lexis or word combinations. It focuses on the basis that language learning is directly associated with the capacity for comprehending and producing lexical phrases as unanalyzed entities, or chunks, and that 'these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar' (Lewis, 1993:89). Willis (1990:78), in rationalizing an argument for a lexical syllabus, notes that 'learners do accumulate language forms, often phrases'. He suggests that a lexical syllabus should be matched with an instructional methodology focused on language use. According to Moudraia (2001), the lexical syllabi of Sinclair (1987) and Willis (1990) are word based, but Lewis's lexical syllabus is specifically not word based, because 'it explicitly recognizes word patterns for (relatively) de-lexical words, collocation power for (relatively) semantically powerful words, and longer multi-word items, particularly institutionalized sentences, as requiring different, and parallel pedagogical treatment' (Lewis, 1993:56 cited in Moudraia, 2001:2).

In the Lexical Approach, Lewis suggests 'pedagogical chunking should be a frequent classroom activity, as students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed and gradually develop ways, not of assembling parts into wholes, but of identifying constituent bits within the whole' (Lewis 1993:67). It means that the primary purpose of the teaching activities is to raise the learners' awareness of lexical chunks, rather than focusing purely on single forms.

Lewis (1997:60-62) introduces some activities, which are used to develop L2 learners' knowledge and awareness of lexical chains:

1. Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language;

2. First and second language comparisons and translation—carry out chunk-for-chunk rather than word-for-word—aimed at raising language awareness;

3. Repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarizing a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned actively;

4. Guessing meanings of lexical items from context;

5. Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations;

6. Working with dictionaries and other reference tools;

7. Working with language corpuses created by the teacher for the classroom use or provided on the Internet.

In addition, Lewis (1997:92-94) proposes some potential principles underpinning the design of classroom activities:

1. The teacher must remain aware of different types of lexical chunks and constantly organize them within a topic framework. This associates them with a certain context so that the learners are able to recall them easily in another similar situation. For example, when the teacher refers to the chunks like *work hard, provide opportunities, profound knowledge* and so on, the topic like *bright future* could be used, which would not only arouse the learners' imagination of the context where the chunks are possibly used but also give them a push in recalling more similar words.

2. Collocation forms the central feature of a lexical view of language and noticing collocations is the central pedagogical activity.

3. Notion. It refers to the brief description of an event, in which some semi-fixed chunks might be used like *by contrast* for comparing, *on one hand… on the other hand…*for relating and so forth.

4. Metaphor gives birth to most fixed chunks in English language such as *raining cats and dogs*, whose meaning is not derived from simple combination of individual words.

5. Phonological chunking makes it easier for the learners to remember a large number of formulaic speeches.

6. Keywords as the most common words in the target language, for example, *take, do, make, get,* etc. play a key role in the learners' discovering and acquiring new lexical chunks. This deserves the teacher's attention in task design.

Without a doubt, underneath the guideline of these principles, some positive changes would occur to the L2 classroom, but it does not mean that Lexical Approach has no deficiencies. Thornbury figures that 'Lexical Approach is not an approach, not in the strict sense, since it lacks of a coherent theory of learning and its theory of language is not fully enough elaborated to allow for ready implementation in terms of syllabus specification' (2002: 187). Additionally, Lewis (1997) stressed that the language classroom materials should be text-based and discourse-based, but he does not introduce and specify any criteria of selecting and

organizing such texts and discourses. Furthermore, although noticing and memorization of lexical chunks are encouraged and emphasized, no clear guidelines of selection and grading (Nunan, 1988) are provided. Finally, Lexical Approach shed light on the natural exposure to the target language but not on the explicit formal instruction, which would also facilitate language input and intake.

Generally speaking, implementing Lexical Approach in the classroom does not lead to methodological changes. Rather, it involves a change in the teacher's mindset and brings some useful suggestions on English teaching. Therefore, this approach may not give a strong push to the promotion of CE pedagogy, but, at least, some aspects of it would influence the CE teachers' view of the nature of language and teaching and move their attention from simply applying the new national syllabus and textbook to digging out the potential approaches to lexis-based CE pedagogy, learner autonomy and language use in the real-world context.

3.1.3 Studies of Lexical Approach in China

In China, the researches on the lexical approach just began since about fifteen years ago, and this can be certified in the 16 most well known journals in the Chinese research field of applied linguistics such as *Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Research, Modern Foreign Languages, Journal of Foreign Languages* and so forth. Vocabulary has gradually been a lively area of study in China. In General, Chinese researchers seem to have grown out of the initial interest in vocabulary size and memorization of words. Studies on lexical chunks (e.g. Yang, 1999; Shen, 1999; Lian, 2001; Diao, 2004), lexical competence (e.g. Wang, 2006; Pu, 2003), and feasibility of Lexical Approach in the CE classroom (e.g. Sun, 2005), are put in the central light.

In the article *Colligation, Collocation, and Chunk in ESL Vocabulary Teaching and Learning* (Pu, 2003), through examining the verb use in some CE learners' writing, mainly in terms of colligation and collocation, Pu finds out that the verb collocations and chunks used by the CE learners are significantly non-native-like. They usually create some collocations that never appear in the native speakers' lexicon (e.g. *reach…aim/purpose/effect*) and overuse some chunks like *pay attention to*, etc. As for the conclusion, Pu points out that it is really necessary for the teacher to give more space to the instruction of lexical chunks in the CE classroom.

In the paper *Application of Lexical Chunks in English Teaching* (Sun, 2005), Sun describes an empirical experiment of implementing the lexical approach in a CE class and finds out that

the learners' production of the target language could be improved via raising their awareness of lexical chunks. Thereby, Sun suggests that most of the class time should be spent in instructing the strategies to learn the multi-word units. Also based on the empirical experiment, it is concluded in Wang's research (2006) that application of the lexical approach could improve the CE learners' writing abilities.

As one of the major works focused on application of the lexical approach in China, the book *Learning English Text by Heart in a Chinese University* (Ding, 2007) has to be mentioned. In this book, the author does not only make a comprehensive overview of previous researches on lexical chunks abroad but also conducts a series of surveys of Chinese learners' beliefs and strategies in lexis learning. Furthermore, in this book, some useful suggestions are provided in order to improve the CE teaching and learning in China.

As for this research, its main distinction from all previous related research work in China is the focus on discussion of the nature of language and learning from the lexical and autonomous perspective, potential approaches to lexis teaching and learning reflected in the CE syllabus and textbook, and implications for the teachers so as to innovate the current CE pedagogy.

3.2 Reflection of traditional methodologies and post-method approaches to learning

Klapper argues that 'there is no convincing evidence from pedagogic research, including research into second language instruction, that there is any universal or 'best' way to teach. Although, clearly, particular approaches are likely to prove more effective in certain situations, blanket prescription is difficult to support theoretically. The art of teaching does not lie in accessing a checklist of skills but rather in knowing which approach to adopt with different students, in different curricular circumstances or in different cultural settings' (2001:67).

There are many publications discussing the various language-teaching methods employed over the years. Brown draws a distinction between methods as 'specific, identifiable clusters of theoretically compatible classroom techniques', and methodology as 'pedagogical practices in general…whatever considerations are involved in 'how to teach' are methodological' (2001:42-43). 'Methodology' here can thus be equated to Richards and Rodgers' 'Procedure' and pedagogic approaches are typically informed by both a theory of language and a theory of language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 1985).

3.2.1 Reflection of the CE teaching methodologies

Due to the deficiency of the foreign language teaching experience and the specialty of Chinese cultural and educational traditions, changes or reforms did not occur to the methodologies of CE teaching, which would have basically promoted our cognition of language, language learning and the invisible classroom practice. As a result, without the guidance of a unified approach to CE teaching and learning, the co-existence of various methods originated from different phases of ELT development featured the current CE pedagogy in China. The following two traditional methodologies have rooted in the minds of various CE stakeholders and consistently affected the CE curriculum development in China, according to my long-term observation and experience in the Harbin University of Commerce.

The first is the Classical or Grammar-Translation methodology that represents the tradition of language teaching ever adopted in the Western world and developed over centuries of teaching not only the classical languages such as Latin and Greek, but also foreign languages (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979). Ellis (2012) attributes the grammar-translation method's fall from favor to its lack of potential for lively communication. However, a greater attention to the focus on forms or structures has now re-emerged with the integration of form and meaning focused instructions, but the paradigm of explicit grammatical instruction in isolation has collapsed nowadays (Thornbury, 2002).

Secondly, the Audio-lingual/Audiovisual Method is derived from the so called 'Army Method' (Richards and Rodgers, 1985), because it was developed through a U.S. Army program devised during the WWII to produce solders' proficiency in the enemies' languages. This method is grounded on the habit formation model of behaviorist psychology as well as the Structuralism theory of linguistics (Pinker, 1994). Its emphasis is on the memorization through pattern drilling instead of the communicative ability. This method was generated with respect to the behaviorist view of learning, which emphasizes the repetitive conditioning of learner responses (Ellis, 2012). Behaviorism is based on the proposition that behavior can be researched scientifically. Learning is an automatic process, which does not involve any cognitive processes in the brain (Wray, 2000). Behaviorist Learning Theory is a process of forming habits and the teacher controls the learning environment and the learners are empty vessels into which the teacher pours knowledge. Identified with the Audio-lingual/ Audiovisual method, it is based upon Structuralism Linguistics and associated with the use of rote learning with repetitive drills (See Anthony, 1963; Brown, 2001; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Krashen, 1982; Nunan, 1991; Richards and Rodgers, 1982).

At some certain historical stage in China, both the methodologies might have played a positive role in the CE curriculum development. For example, at the recovery stage of CE education after the 10 years' Cultural Revolution as described in Chapter 2, Grammar-

Translation and Audio-Lingualism might be the best teaching methods that people could find. Ellis (2012) made an important point that the methods may succeed initially when introduced by skilled and enthusiastic teachers or personalities and are delivered in experimental or well-financed situations with well-behaved, responsive and motivated students. However, when curricular and social circumstances got changed, these prescribed or general ways of teaching might lose their color in the complex and invisible classroom world and then problems arose (Ellis, 2012). CE curriculum development are just confronted with this situation that the changing circumstances demand the evolution of approaches to teaching and learning.

In summary, according to the introduction of research background in Chapter 2, some certain problems of CE classroom instruction could be ascribed to the influence of these two methodologies but it is far from the whole repertoire. On one hand, these methodologies still exist and function throughout the whole EFL pedagogical system from elementary to tertiary level in China, even if the appeal for the implementation of CLT and TBLT has been lasting for many years. On the other hand, it is well known that the extent to which the prescribed methods matches the practice at the chalk face is very often another issue altogether, especially in the circumstance of a new round CE curriculum reform after 2007.

3.2.2 'Post-Method'-Approaches to learning

If 'Method' involves a particular set of features to be followed almost as a panacea, it can be suggested that we are now in a 'Post-Method' era where the emphasis is on the looser concept of 'Approach', which starts from some basic principles developed in the design and development of practice (Richards and Rodgers 1985).

First of all, the Natural Approach, being an echo of the 'naturalistic' attribute of Direct Method, was proposed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). This approach emphasized 'Comprehensible Input', as defined by Krashen (1985) that L2 acquisition takes place only when a learner is able to input grammatical forms with comprehension. He argued that 'acquisition' (a natural subconscious process) is distinguished from 'learning' (a conscious process) and learning couldn't lead to acquisition (Krashen, 1985). The focus of language learning is on meaning, but not on form and the goal is to communicate with speakers of the target language (Krashen 1985). Influenced by Krashen, various principles and approaches of ELT focused on communicative functions of the target language emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. Classrooms were characterized by the attempts to ensure authenticity of materials and meaningfulness of tasks.

However，Krashen's theories on language acquisition have been challenged by the researchers and the theorists who argue that while rich language input is necessary, it is not sufficient to create proficient speakers of the target language, even in immersion contexts. Hammerly argued: 'If 'comprehensible input' alone were adequate in the classroom, immersion graduates, after over 7000 hours of such input, would be very competent speakers of the second language – but they are not. They are very inaccurate' (1991:66).

Secondly, the view that input exposure to the target language is sufficient has been widely criticized. For adult learners, as is the case with CE learning, there is research evidence to suggest that the form-focused instruction may be more effective at an age when learners have the maturity and motivation to use or transfer appropriate learning strategies (Harley and Hart, 1997; Muñoz, 2006; Singleton, 1989). The lack of focus-on-form features is strongly among Klapper's concerns with the focus-on-meaning natural approaches (Klapper & Rees, 2003):

1. The embracing of a meaning-based pedagogy with little conscious attention to form, in direct contradiction of one of the classic statements of communicative competence (cf. Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983); grammar is tied to certain functional contexts and learners have to rely on unanalyzed chunks of language without any real understanding of their structure;
2. Forms appear independently of grammatical context; the resulting absence of a reliable frame of formal reference means learners' inaccuracies become systemic;
3. The concomitant fails to build a generative language framework that enables learners to recombine linguistic elements and thus to create new or unique utterances.

Thirdly, although current approaches stress the need for a greater focus on form (see e.g. Doughty and Williams, 1998), Schmidt (1994, 2001) argues that this 'focus on form' should be on specific forms, rather than a global approach. He stresses the intended noticing of specific linguistic items as they occur in input, rather than the awareness of grammatical rules. As Swain (1985) argued, the failure to achieve native-like competence in grammar and other features of the target language might be due to the learners' lack of opportunities of actually using or noticing their target language. In a classroom environment, particularly where the emphasis is on rich input, the teachers do most of the talking while the pupils listen. The students tend to get few opportunities to speak and merely give short answers to the display questions. This is a crucial dilemma. Thereby, if the teacher needs to supply substantial input, the teacher needs to ensure that the input is 'taken in', that is, noticed and acquired by the students. Gass and Selinker (1994:58) have advanced the idea of 'intake', 'wherein the input, vocabulary, grammar and expressions needs to be internalized by the students before meaningful output is possible'.

Furthermore, Long (1996) developed the Interaction Hypothesis, which focuses on the notion of interaction as a stimulus for effective output. In this hypothesis, the process of interaction, when a problem in communication is encountered and learners engage in negotiating for meaning, engenders acquisition. Input becomes comprehensible through the modifications from interaction. Again, feedback also leads learners to modify their output.

Activities to develop interaction include group and pair work, for example, Swain's Dicta-gloss, where pupils collaborate to reconstruct dictated texts, is now well established as an interactive activity (Kowal and Swain, 1997; Swain, 2000). As well, interaction can be developed through a task-based approach, which permits a 'problem-solving negotiation between knowledge that the learner holds and new knowledge' (Candlin and Murphy, 1987). Thereby, the job of the teacher is to provide suitable tasks to facilitate this process, in which the students interact with each other or with the teacher, and encounter the new language items, which they can assimilate and use spontaneously.

All in all, 'it has been realized that there never was and probably will never be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are consonant with what we know about second language acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself' (Nunan, 1991). This 'signals a significant move from attention on teaching to attention on learning; classrooms are places in which students learn rather than being mainly places in which teachers teach. Teachers are facilitators of learning' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004:89). Evidently, 'learning is a social, collaborative and interactional activity in which it is difficult to 'teach' specifically– the teacher sets up the learning situation and enables learning to occur, with intervention to provoke and prompt that learning through scaffolding' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004:90). This is also the key argument throughout this dissertation, which any possible suggestions out of the analysis and discussion will be underpinned with. As for the analysis of the CECR 2007 and the NHCE, the author expects to take a look at what innovations are reflected and how the CE learning is disciplined in the syllabus and supported in the textbook, consulting the interactive learning approaches as discussed above.

3.3 The learner as a dominator of learning

3.3.1 Scaffolding-Redefinition of the learner role

According to Jerome Bruner, scaffolding is 'a process of setting up the situation to make' the learner's 'entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to' the learner 'as he becomes skilled enough to manage it' (1986: 138). As pointed out by

Gibbons (2003), scaffolding could be divided into three related scales: first, the support structure to enable certain activities and skills to develop; second, the actual carrying out of particular activities in class; and third, the assistance provided in moment-to-moment interaction, the sequence of which can be seen to move from macro to micro, from planned to improvised, and from structure to process. This means that the teacher would modify the role of the knowledge transmitter and add other roles such as facilitator and monitor, so that the learners should no longer be treated solely as the recipients but the independent social humans who can be assisted to work on their own ZPD – the Zone of Proximal Development which is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Van Lier (2004) attached six central features to scaffolding and claimed that any type of it is contingent, collaborative and interactive. These features are further refined and added with specific schooling features. They are respectively:

1. Continuity: Tasks are repeated with variation and connected with one another;
2. Contextual support: Exploration is encouraged in a safe, supportive environment, and access to means and goals is promoted in a variety of ways;
3. Inter-subjectivity: Mutual engagement and rapport are established, and encouragement and non-threatening participation in a shared community of practice are endorsed;
4. Contingency: Task procedures are adjusted depending on actions of learners. Contributions and utterances are oriented towards each other and may be co-constructed;
5. Handover/Takeover: There is an increasing role for the learner as skills and confidence increase, and the teacher watches carefully for the learners' readiness to take over increasing parts of the action;
6. Flow: Skills and challenges are in balance. Participants are focused on the task and are in tune with each other.

In the instructive EFL learning, the ZPD and scaffolding normally involve the interaction between a more knowledgeable person-the teacher and the less knowledgeable people-the students, which was termed as the vertical construction by Gibbons (2002). However, the classroom process is never built on the mere top down structure. In the work of a couple of researchers (Donato, 1994; Gibbons, 2002; Mercer, 1995; Rogoff, 1995), the notion of scaffolding has been expanded to the relationship of equal knowledge, which means that in some circumstances, students create zones of proximal development for each other and engage in mutual scaffolding. Such scaffolding is called 'collective scaffolding' (Donato, 1994; Moll, 1990) and it has been found that students working in a group can produce results

that they are unable to produce on their own. In addition to these two scaffolding contexts, van Lier (1996) pointed that students can work with the other person at the lower level of comprehension and this offers them an opportunity to verbalize, clarify and extend their own knowledge. Furthermore, students can draw on their own resources-the models from the teacher, peers and other resources in the learning environment-to supplement their shortcomings in knowledge and competence.

Therefore, in the EFL classroom interaction, the students have access to at least four modes of scaffolding: being assisted by the teacher through guiding, advising and modeling; collaborating with other learners when learning is co-constructed; instructing a low level learner, by which both have the chance to enhance comprehension and increase output; working alone when internalization and risk-taking are employed. From the perspective of the sociocultural theories of language learning, scaffolding corresponds to the instructive interaction in the EFL classroom that is to negotiate, cooperate and interact to learn with the assistance of the instructor in the classroom setting (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Schmidt, 1994, 2001). In general, both the features and the modes of scaffolding just reflect a philosophy that the rights of decision-making in their own learning should be given back to the learners and the classroom should return to its nature of being a place for learning but not teaching. Since the learner autonomy is one of the key points of the CECR 2007, the strategies or requirements of how to apply this philosophy into the CE classroom will become the focus of analysis in this research and also, convincingly, some supporting tasks or activities would be observed in the matching textbook, NHCE.

3.3.2 Learner autonomy

The key difference between the autonomous-learning based and the traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught (Nunan, 1999). Fotos and Browne (2004) made the same argument that in an autonomous learning system, the learner is in control of the lesson content and the learning process.

This basically formulates the conception of learner autonomy, in which the role of individual learners in directing their own learning process, both inside and outside the classroom is emphasized (Alford & Pachler, 2007; Benson, 2000; Breen, 2001). Moreover, the realization of individual differences in the autonomous learning approach has also led to the 'learners' voices' (Benson & Nunan, 2005) that are broadly involved with learners' motivations, reasons for success, fossilization or dropping out, and learners' choices in how

they approach the language learning process (Benson, 2000). Thus, it could be assumed that learner autonomy as a fundamental educational goal is set to develop the learners' abilities to manage decisions around lesson content and learning process and to act on their individual beliefs, experiences, learning styles and preferences.

Nunan (2004) provided some suggestions on how to increase learner involvement in the learning process. He argued that learner autonomy could be created by: making instructional goals clear to learners; helping learners to create their own goals; encourage learners to use their second language outside of the classroom; help learners to become more aware of learning processes and strategies; showing learners how to identify their own preferred styles and strategies; giving learners opportunities to make choices between different options in the classroom; teaching learners how to create their own learning tasks; providing learners with opportunities to master some certain aspects of the second language and then teach them to others; creating contexts in which learners investigate language and become their own researchers of language.

Nunan's perceptions of the learner roles are based on one of Tudor's arguments (1992) that language teaching should be geared around the students' intentions and resources. Language instruction should merely involve the development of awareness. From this point of view, in the autonomous-learning based classroom, the students may have the responsibilities as summarized in the following areas (Tudor, 1992):
1. Self-awareness as a language learner. This is mainly concerned with the students' motivations to learn. In particular, the intrinsic motivations usually determine how much effort they are willing to put in and their attitudes to the target language and the learning process itself.
2. Awareness of learning goals. This means, students should understand the learning goals of tasks and activities in the classroom interactions, and the goals of different stages of their learning process. Students should also be aware of their current competences in language and their abilities to analyze or discuss the goals with the teacher.
3. Awareness of learning options. This involves students acquiring an understanding of what language learning entails, of the various learning strategies, study options and resources they can use, and how different activities can advance learning, both in class and self-learning context.
4. Language awareness. Without having to be linguists, students need at least a basic idea of how language is structured and used.

As a matter of fact, the notion of learner autonomy has significantly influenced the development of the approaches to language learning, such as the ever discussed in this

chapter, Lewis' Lexical Approach (1993), Willis' Lexical Syllabus (1997), Kreshen's Natural Approach and Input Hypothesis (1985), Schmitt's Noticing Hypothesis (2001), Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), Scaffolding Hypothesis (Gibbons, 2003; van Lier, 2004). All of them make a great emphasis of the management of learning process in the classroom and conversely the development of learner autonomy would evidently underpin the application of these approaches. Regarding the analysis of the CECR 2007 and the NHCE in this research, learner autonomy will be seriously taken into accountability, as from the year 2007, it has become the key point of the CE curriculum development in China (Lu, 2001).

As a summary of this whole chapter, clearly presented is the theoretical framework of this dissertation. First of all, language tends to be viewed as a grammaticalized lexical system in this research mainly according to the arguments of Lewis (1993, 1997) and Willis (1997, 2003). Secondly the management of interactive and cooperative learning process is considered to be the basis of L2 classroom implementation in respect to Long (2001) and the other researchers as mentioned in this chapter. Thirdly, in terms of the learner roles, the features and modes of scaffolding (Gibborn, 2002; van Lier, 2004) as well as some aspects of learner autonomy (Nunan, 2004, Tudor, 1992) have offered the clear underpinning principles. Finally, learner autonomy as a sort of universal learning approach (Benson & Nunan, 2005) covering the typical features of all other learning approaches, even though its concept is still uncertain in the research field (Benson, 2000), is put into focus in this research. In this dissertation, as a result of lexis being the basis of language system and learner autonomy being a catch-all term (Benson, 2000), the theoretical framework underlying the subsequent research analysis, briefly, is constructed on the potentials of lexis-based teaching and learning underpinned with learner autonomy.

Chapter 4   Research methodology

4.1 Research methodology and its philosophy

4.1.1 Research methodology

In this chapter, what to be presented are the methodologies selected to answer the research questions proposed in Chapter 1:

1. What approaches are to be implemented in the classroom according to analysis of the CECR national syllabus?

2. What does analysis of a College English textbook show are the challenges in potential approaches to teaching lexis in the College English classroom in a Chinese university such as the Harbin University of Commerce?

At first, since the focus of this research is on the potential approaches to lexis-based teaching and learning, the principles of lexical pedagogy, mainly concerned with the classroom interaction and cooperation and the development of learner autonomy as discussed in the last chapter, formed the underpinning theoretical framework. Secondly, based on the author's long-term observation and experience, the research context is set in Harbin University of Commerce, because this university can be viewed as a representative of a majority of HEIs in China as briefly introduced in Chapter 1 and any observable features of the CE curriculum development in this university could be to some extent universalistic. Thirdly, some potential approaches to innovating the lexis-focused CE teaching and learning in terms of the major findings in this research are supposed to be figured out through the analysis of an official syllabus document, *the Curriculum Requirements of College English of 2007* and a textbook, *New Horizon College English*, widely used in most HEIs in China. Because of the official nature and background of these two documents, authenticity and validity of the data resources should be highly convincing.

Thus, the primary methodologies employed in this research are obviously literature review and documentary analysis. Through the literature review of ELT methodologies and innovative language learning approaches as discussed in chapter 3, a framework of potential lexis-based learning principles underpinning the research arguments is constructed, and through the documentary analysis, the authentic documentary data will be collected and analyzed so as to reach the possible findings of challenges and implications to the innovation

of CE teaching and learning in China. According to Bailey (1994), typically, this study should be attributed to the documentary research.

4.1.2 Documentary research philosophy

Documentary research method refers to the analysis of documents that contain the information about the phenomenon we wish to study (Bailey, 1994). The documentary research method or the use of documentary sources in social research is often marginalized and used only as the supplement to the conventional social surveys. In fact, this method is just as good as and sometimes even more cost-effective than other methods such as social surveys, in-depth interviews and participant observation, which are usually thought of as the most broadly adopted research methods, but they are not the only ones available nor are they always useful (Mogalakwe, 1994).

Payne and Payne (2004) argued that the documentary method is indeed a set of techniques used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in private or public domains. Prior (2003) further pointed out that documents are useful in rendering more visible the phenomena under study but this has to be taken in conjunction with a whole range of contextual factors at the same time. As in the analogy of the inert opera libretto, it cannot be read on its own, but has to be understood in the context of the whole action, drama, music and performance of the opera.

With respect to the above-mentioned attractions of documentary research, the documentary method is taken in this research and the more specific reasons are drawn out as followed. First of all, this method enables the researcher to reach inaccessible persons or subjects (Bailey, 1994). In this research, one of the key issues is to ascertain the potential philosophies of CE curriculum development held by the stakeholders such as the policy makers and the textbook writers. In the case of CE classroom implementation, their insights into the nature of language and learning are powerfully influential according to the particular educational background in China as discussed in Chapter 2. Hence, whether language is viewed as a grammaticalized lexical system (Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2001) and whether CE learning is centered on the development of learner autonomy (van Lier, 2004; Nunan, 2004), which are determinative to the quality of CE classroom teaching and learning, become the crucial elements in the analysis of these two documents.

Secondly, although documents may be highly biased and selective as they were not intended to be research data but were written for a different purpose and audience (Bailey, 1994), in this research, it just provides the researcher a chance to have a glimpse of the

pedagogical paradigm underneath any biases and selections. As a result of this typical feature of documents, it will be available for the author to find out a potential access to the innovation of the principles in support to the construction of the current CE syllabus and textbook throughout the in-depth analysis.

Last but not least, documents must be studied in their context, in order to understand their significance or meaning of the times (Bailey, 1994). Thus, the analysis of these two documents in this research cannot be only constrained into the documentary texts, but should also be connected with a sample CE teaching and learning context in China. As aforementioned, Harbin University of Commerce is set as the sample research context and the author, because of more than 12 years' working in this university, also has some personal long-term observation and experience for reference. In fact, without this identity, it would be impossible for the author to carry on such a research.

4.2 Parameters of analysis

4.2.1 Parameters of the syllabus analysis

Emergence of this new centralized national syllabus, the CECR 2007, was due to the initiative of the MOE to establish an updated CE curriculum system in response to the strong requirements from the public. Under the guidance of the innovative approaches to L2 teaching and learning, the design of this new CE syllabus should not be seen as the simple modification of the previous CE syllabi.

The CECR 2007 proposed a new mode of CE teaching and learning combined with the modern information technologies, particularly the Internet. The requirements of vocabulary size are extremely enhanced and learner autonomy is emphasized as an evolutionary approach to innovating the CE teaching and learning. Moreover, self-access to the Internet learning is treated as an essential means to put into application this new mode of CE teaching and learning. In response to this trend, the focus of CE curriculum reform is put on the transformation from the traditional teacher-dominated and form-focused classroom instruction (Ellis, 2004) to the management of learning process in the classroom. A series of learning approaches such as Scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002; Lier, 2004; Nunan, 2004), Interaction (Long, 2001) and so on are potentially required and attempted in the empirical CE classroom implementation. The ultimate goal might be set to facilitate the learners' lexis-based learning underpinned with learner autonomy (Nunan, 2004).

During the analysis of this document, the answers need to meet the following questions:

1. To what extent does it reflect a product approach with a focus on language systems (Nunan, 1988; Ellis, 2004)?
2. To what extent does it demonstrate a process approach with a focus on learning processes (Breen, 1984, 1987, 2001)?
3. To what extent is it hybrid (Nunan, 1988; 1989; 1991; 1999; 2003; 2004)?
4. To what extent does the lexical approach underpin the curriculum design (McCarthy, 1990; Sinclair, 2000; Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2002; Willis, 1990, 2003, 2007)?
5. What is the role of the teacher (Lier, 1996, 2004; Ellis, 2003, 2012)?
6. What is the role of the learner (Lier, 2004; Nunan, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; 2003)?

4.2.2 Parameters of the textbook analysis

The course-book of *New Horizon College English* is specially designed for the undergraduate students in general HEIs in China. As the original intention of this course design, the students are expected to have an overall development of comprehensive English proficiency after the four years' CE learning and eventually pass two national CE tests, the CET band 4/6 as aforementioned in Chapter 1.

Underpinned with the new syllabus, CECR 2007, this course put into practice the new mode of CE teaching and learning with a combination of self-directed Internet learning and traditional textbook-based classroom instruction. This attempt made the first time in China (Pan & Block, 2011) and stimulated the renewal of the other similar CE textbooks. As the typical feature of this course-book, the Internet really opened a window and offered a new access to the development of self-directed CE learning. For example, the students are provided with the convenience and freedom to schedule their time and manage their learning in more selective modes, and as well, the teacher uses the same channel to observe, evaluate, assess and suggest their learning. In spite of the numerous advantages of the Internet-based learning approach, its affection in the field of CE language learning is limited and certainly the authentic classroom is always the best place for the implementation of L2 teaching and learning. Also, it is of no doubt that the most important tool to carry out the classroom implementation, especially for the inexperienced teachers, is the textbook (Ellis, 2012). Therefore, the analysis of the NHCE course book appears to be very important in this research. Through this analysis, it could be indicated how much effect the principles of lexis-based CE pedagogy underpinned with the development of learner autonomy, as required in the CECR 2007, have on the empirical CE classroom implementation, besides the assistance of the Internet learning.

In this analysis, some parts of Unit 2 from respectively the Reading &Writing book and the Listening & Speaking book of the NHCE are made the samples. What supposed to be met are the answers to the following questions:

1. How does this course book correspond with CECR 2007? (White, 1988; Nunan, 1988)
2. How is vocabulary presented (Thornbury, 2002)?
3. How is vocabulary instructed? (Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2002; Willis, 1990, 2003, 2007)
4. What principles are the design and sequence of tasks based on (Willis, 2007)?
5. How are the interactive learning, cooperative learning and scaffolded learning supported (Lier, 1996; Swain, 2000)?
6. How is the autonomous learning supported (Benson, 1994, 2000, 2007; Benson & Nunan, 2005)?
7. How is the Internet-based learning carried on (Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000)?

4.3 Data collection

All these documents analyzed in this research are published for circulation formally or officially and the designers or writers of CE syllabus and textbook are professional in the domain of CE curriculum development in China. With difference from the documents in the private domains (Bailey, 1994), the data collected in this research could be thought of as being anonymous and first-handed.

Due to the top-down structure of education system in China, any new requirements in the centralized national syllabus could be treated as a guideline for the CE classroom implementation. Hence, the data reflecting the new trend of lexis-based CE pedagogy underpinned with learner autonomy will be put into focus and given priority to discuss in the syllabus analysis. Moreover, in the case of the textbook being a mediator of various types of syllabi, the process-focused or the product-focused, the features of lexical syllabus (Willis, 2007) are also worth attention. Additionally, in order to make the data analysis or discussion more specified and clarified, only one unit will be chosen from the textbook as a sample and the potential language learning principles underlying the tasks or activities will be collected as the primary data to analyze.

In general, all the elements in the CECR 2007 and the NHCE concerned with the lexis-based teaching and learning and the potential principles underpinning the development of learner autonomy such as interaction, cooperation, scaffolding and so on as discussed in Chapter 3 will be put into the focus of data collection in this research. Based on this, the central theme of the research arguments and findings will be clarified and established.

Chapter 5   Analysis of the document of CECR 2007

5.1 Introduction

In response to the upgrading dissatisfaction with CE pedagogy, the MOE commissioned a group of linguistic experts in 1998 to revise the old CE national Syllabus and authorized nine universities to carry on the experimental reform of CE teaching and learning. However, this attempt was less than satisfactory (Yan & Wu, 2002) so the MOE took charge and started to design the reform itself.

After an important conference held in Yanan in August 2002, the Higher Education Department of the MOE signed a document, the spirit of which was to start a fundamental change of the CE curriculum development in China. In response to the optimistic feedback of this document, the MOE decided to release it and ask for further endeavor to reform. Therefore, after some necessary subtle revisions in 2007, this document was formally released as a new national syllabus, later known as CECR 2007, to guide the CE pedagogy in most HEIs of China.

5.2 The CECR 2007 as a hybrid syllabus

The old model of CE teaching and learning is typically featured with the passive role of the students whose main duty was to obtain the knowledge from the teacher and the textbooks. This approach to learning has proved ineffective in cultivating students' abilities to use English for communicative purposes and also reject comprehensible input of the target language (Long, 2006). To reform this old model is urgent, which is not only the voice of the public but of the government as well.

The CECR 2007 document as an essential educational policy has started the rapid change of the ongoing CE pedagogy through the powerful top-down official channel. The key feature of this syllabus is its focus on product as well as process, or in other words, it seems to be a hybrid syllabus. According to White (1988), the product-oriented syllabi are concerned with what should be learnt. That is, they attach importance to the subject matter of instruction and evaluate the outcomes in term of mastery of the language. As for the process-oriented syllabi, Breen (1984, 1987) stressed that a process syllabus is basically a task-based one (Prabhu, 1987), which emphasis is on the learning process. That is, selection and grading of traditional activities are replaced by larger tasks, in which the learner plays a main role in learning and negotiation becomes the key concept (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000).

5.2.1 Features of CECR 2007 as a product syllabus

White (1988) offers a useful summary of syllabus types, which is substantially reproduced by the author as in the following table (5.2.1: Refer to *The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation, and Management* by White in 1988):

Table 5.2.1

What is to be learnt? (Form-Function)	How is it to be learnt? (Process)
Product emphasis	Process emphasis
External to the learner	Internal to the learner
Determined by authority	Negotiated between learners and teachers
Teacher as decision-maker	Learner and teacher as joint decision-makers
Content=What the subject is to the expert	Content=What the subject is to the learner
Objective defined in advance	Objective described afterwards
Assessment by achievement or by mastery	Achievement in relation to learner's criteria of success
Doing things to the learner	Doing things for or with the learner

According to White's summary of the first syllabus type (1988), some parts of the CECR 2007 are a little bit product-focused. At first, a statement is addressed in the end of the first paragraph of the CECR document that '*College English Curriculum Requirements has been drawn up to provide colleges and universities with the guidelines for English instruction to non-English major students*'. The target learners are mentioned briefly in the term of '*non-English major students*' but who are they? And why do they learn CE? '*The needs of the country and society for qualified personnel in the new era*' (See Appendix I, Page 1, Para 1), as the extrinsic pressure that the learners will possibly face up to, are not expected to purify the complexity and variety of the learners' motivations in CE learning.

Obviously, for the second, the objectives of CE curriculum are pre-determined by the policy makers and imposed to the learners externally. The development of linguistic competences is simplified and incorporated into the development of four macro language skills and each skill is specified into particular requirements. For example, in the statement of basic requirements for listening: Students ' *should be able to understand English radio and TV programs spoken at a speed of about 130 to 150 words per minute (wpm), grasping the main ideas and key points. They are expected to be able to employ basic listening strategies to facilitate comprehension*' (See Appendix I, page 6). As for the explicit language knowledge (Ellis,

2011), vocabulary is absolutely emphasized because the exact number of words that students are required to master is provided with the multi-level requirements. For example, at the basic level,'*4,795 words and 700 phrases*' among '*which 2,000 are active words*' are required to obtain.

The above two points typically indicate the features of the product syllabus according to White (1988). Analysis of the needs of individual learner is out of focus; a series of objectives are pre-determined; the linguistic knowledge is pre-packaged by being divided into small and discrete parts; the outcomes are equivalent with mastery of language.

Furthermore, the subject matter of instruction is definitely important in this syllabus, which is demonstrated by a series of requirements in both the '*formative assessment and summative assessment*', as stated in the section of Evaluation (see Appendix I, page2). For example, while doing the '*self-assessment*' or '*peer-assessment*', the most advanced students will be marked with '*A*', which means they are supposed to understand '*English literature*', '*TV news*' and so on, as well as be '*able to master all linguistic skills*'. That implies that the classroom teaching will be centered on the subject matter of instruction and the outcomes will be evaluated in terms of the mastery of language. In addition, it is worth pointing out that the teacher may still play an authoritative role, taking charge of decision-making in every domain of the CE classroom teaching and learning.

As same as the aforementioned two points, these examples illustrate that this syllabus is not opposite to White's (1988) summary of the first type of syllabi. Throughout this whole document, a number of similar examples could be found out. This indicates that the CECR 2007 evidently holds some features of a product syllabus.

5.2.2 Features of CECR 2007 as a process syllabus

Although the CECR 2007 obviously share some features of product syllabus like the lexis based and skill-based syllabus, it is still unreasonable to say that this document is less process oriented since much emphasis is imposed on the development of learners' abilities of decision-making around lesson content and learning process (Reinders & Lewis, 2006). Breen (1987) gave a theoretical overview of the new approaches in the process syllabus design. He identifies the conventional paradigm of propositional plans as the formal and functional syllabuses, which map out the knowledge of language and the conventions of language performance, and proposes an alternative paradigm of process plans, well known as task-based or process syllabuses now, which emphasis shift away from the language system to the learner's cognitive processes (Breen, 1987; cited in Gray, 2003).

The CECR 2007 sets a new model of CE teaching and learning, in which the teacher *'should enable students to select materials and methods suited to their individual needs, obtain the guidance in learning strategies, and gradually improve their autonomous learning abilities'* (See Appendix I, Page 1). The key features of this model are:

1. The main components of CE course are *'knowledge and practical skills of the English language, learning strategies and intercultural communication'*;

2. The objective of CE course is to *'develop the students' ability to use English'*, *'ability to study independently'*, and *'cultural awareness'*;

3. The principle of CE teaching is *'to provide different guidance for different group of students'* and '*Instruct*' them *'in accordance with their aptitude'* and *'specific needs of'* the target language learning;

4. *'The formative assessment'*, specifically referring to *'self-assessment, peer assessment'* and teacher assessment, is conducted in the *'teaching process'* and used to *'facilitate the effective monitoring of students' autonomous learning'*.

Apparently, from viewing all these above statements, *'autonomous learning'*, *'self-directed learning'*, *'individualized learning'* or learner-centeredness becomes the focus of this new syllabus, which indicates a critical transformation from teacher-centered classroom implementation to the development of learner autonomy.

Following the Western trends of ELT development, most Chinese researchers 'agree that a major shift is taking place in education away from the teacher-centered classroom toward a learner-centered system where the learner is in control of the lesson content and learning process' (Fotos & Browne, 2004:88). According to Nunan (1999:12), 'the key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught'.

From this perspective, the CECR 2007 is likely to be a modified process-oriented syllabus because the students are given freedom to select and determine some certain methods of instruction and some strategies of learning, according to the new model of CE teaching and learning and the formative assessments such as individual and peer assessments in this document (See Appendix I, Page1), even though not purely or completely.

5.2.3 Hybrid features of CECR 2007

In terms of all above discussed in this section, both types of syllabus, product and process, are referred to and valued in this document for guiding CE course design and classroom implementation. These examples suggest that the CECR 2007 would be typified as a holistic Hybrid syllabus, the major concerns of which are objective, language, learning and learner as summarized by Breen (2001) in terms of aim, content and methodology. Also, it is likely to be a frame of the CE curriculum system, which would be covered over a period of time with a starting point and a final goal (Cunningsworth, 1995).

Moreover, the implicit views of the nature of language and learning (Hutchinson & Whitehouse, 1986) are reflected in this syllabus. For example, in terms of the main components of CE course, '*knowledge and practical skills of the English language, learning strategies and intercultural communication*' (see Appendix I, Page 1) are highlighted, among which knowledge and skills imply the target language to be learnt and strategies and communication imply the incorporative approaches to learning. In Nunan's *Syllabus Design* (1988), he argued that the syllabus designer would usually incorporate the answers to three key questions: what linguistic elements should be taught? what do the learners want to do with the language? and what activities would stimulate and promote language acquisition?

Furthermore, 'the move from the target language itself as the basis of the course content is not new but the emphasis on the learning process and the way in which it automatically defines the methodology is. In particular, the involvement of the learner in decision-making is new and exciting' (Gray, 2003). In this syllabus, for instance, '*students are expected to assess their own or their classmates*'' English competencies and '*then based on the results of self-assessment or peer assessment, ... students can arrange for learning at the next stage*' (See Appendix I, Page 14). The general educational aim is to guide the students to understand, maximize, and control their cognitive power.

As a result, learner differences that the teacher has always been aware of are now a valuable resource to exploit. Self-direction, learner-autonomy and negotiation are the order of the day (Gray, 2003). This means that, from the literal view of this document as well as Ellis' arguments of the teacher as the learning instructor (2003), the teacher should no longer play an authoritative role in the learner-centered classroom. This advantageous change is supported with a number of remarkable statements such as '*the ability to learn independently*', '*the development of individualized study methods*' and so on in this syllabus. Definitely, they could be generalized into the term of learner autonomy (Alford & Pachler, 2007; Benson, 2000; Breen, 2001; Conacher & Kelly-Holmes, 2007) and covered with Nunan's summary of learner awareness (Nunan, 1999) as ever discussed in Chapter 3.

5.3 Vocabulary or lexis focused aspects in the CECR 2007

The importance of vocabulary has been discussed in the above chapters, for example, cited in Chapter 2, a remark is given by David Wilkins that 'without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed' (1976:78). Stephen Krashen (1985:37) in the *Natural Approach* stated similarly like this: 'Vocabulary is basic for communication. If acquirers do not recognize the meaning of the key words used by those who address them they will be unable to participate in the conversation. If they express some ideas or ask for information, they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meaning'. As well, most Chinese CE learners acknowledge the importance of vocabulary acquisition and broadly accept the prototypical philosophy that the larger one's vocabulary, the easier it is to express one's thoughts and feelings. A language learner with a poor vocabulary may find it difficult to read and write well and hard to understand what others speak (Thornbury, 2002).

However, for a long time, vocabulary teaching in China has not always been very responsive to such concerns, and curriculum designers and teachers have not fully recognized the tremendous communicative advantage in developing an extensive vocabulary (Thornbury, 1996). Underlying the effects of traditional methodologies such as Grammar-Translation and Audio-lingualism, the CE class gave greater priority to instruction of grammatical structures but the meaning-focused lexical instruction was fairly unvalued. Optimistically, in the document of CECR 2007, awareness is raised as to the importance of vocabulary development in CE learning and much attention is turned to vocabulary size, collocations and word frequency. Vocabulary becomes the largest and most important task facing the language learners (Swan, 1985). This is a reflection of the development of the lexical syllabus (Willis, 2007) and the recognition of the key role of lexical chunks (Lewis, 1993) in language acquisition.

5.3.1 Vocabulary as the quantified benchmark of the multi-leveled requirements

Our final goal of knowing a word is to work the word into practical communication so it is not enough only to know its receptive knowledge. Receptive knowledge exceeds productive knowledge and generally but not always precedes it (Sinclair, 1991; Schmitt, 2006; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). That is, we understand more words than we utter (Nation, 2001). From this point of view, estimates of vocabulary size in this syllabus have obviously taken into account the distinction between receptive and productive knowledge of a word and make an emphasis of both. For example, at the level 1-3 required in this syllabus, the number of receptive vocabulary is respectively 4,795, 6,395 and 7,675, but the number of productive or active

vocabulary is much smaller, separately 2,000, 2,200 and 2,360. This type of classification of the required vocabulary reflects the designers' consideration of lexical frequency since more frequent, a word is more productive or active (Nunan, 1999).

Because of the distinction of the students' EFL proficiency and teaching resources in various universities across China, the CECR 2007 requires the universities to design their school-based CE syllabi to provide '*different guidance for different groups of students and instructing them in accordance with their aptitude so as to meet the specific needs of individualized teaching*' (See Appendix I, Section 2). Based on this situation, three levels of requirements for CE teaching are preset in the CECR 2007 document, namely basic, intermediate and higher requirements. This would not only provide the students with more options of starting level of their CE learning but also give the universities more freedom to set their own school-based CE curriculum objectives under the permission of their practical teaching resources. According to Nunan's (2004) summary of learner awareness and Van Lier's (2004) generalization of scaffolding (See Chapter 3), this design is one of the most advantageous parts in the CECR 2007.

The basic requirements are compulsory for all CE students to reach and simultaneously the universities should also strive to push forward the intermediate and higher requirements by providing '*favorable conditions*' for '*those students who have a relatively higher English proficiency and stronger capacity for learning*' (See Appendix I, Section 2) to further develop their language abilities. In order to clearly mark the distinction between the multi-leveled requirements, the CECR 2007 employs the word number as a quantity means to distinguish the levels of language skills, translation and vocabulary, only with exception of speaking skill, which is prescribed literally. The specific distinctions relying on the measurement of vocabulary amount are presented in the table 5.3.1:

Table 5.3.1

	Basic Level	**Intermediate Level**	**Higher Level**
Listening	At a speed of about 130 to 150 wpm	At a speed of 150-180 wpm	No requirement of the speed.
Reading	At a speed of about 70-100 wpm	At a speed of about 90-120 wpm	No requirement of the speed.
Writing	No less than 120 words within 30 minutes	No less than 160 words within 30 minutes	No less than 200 words on a given topic
Translation	300 words from English into Chinese and 250 words from Chinese into	350 words from English into Chinese and 300 words from Chinese into	400 words from English into Chinese and 350 words from Chinese into

	English	English	English
Vocabulary	A total of 4,795 words and 700 phrases, in which 2000 words are active	A total of 6,395 words and 1,200 phrases, in which 2,200 words are active	A total of 7,675 words and 1,870 phrases, in which 2,360 are active

As shown in the table 5.3.1, vocabulary is used as an essential means to distinguish the students' CE proficiency levels. Some reasons underneath this phenomenon might be deeply concerned with the philosophy of learning and knowing a word. According to Thornbury, 'the ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones' (2002:189). Seemingly, being an echo to these potentials of lexis learning, a certain number of phrases are specially required at these three levels, respectively 700, 1,200, and 1870. This implies that the ideologies underpinning the CE classroom instruction might be shifting from form-focused to meaning-focused, as a result of which learning process and learner autonomy would be put in light. Following the discussion in Chapter 3, this kind of shift is argued by many researchers such as Willis (1990), Lewis (1993), Nunan (2004), Ellis (2012), Lier (2004), Long (1983b, 1990, 1991, 1996) and so on, to be the trend of ELT development.

Besides, while coming across the document of CECR 2007, we might be able to find a significant feature that there is no statement of what grammatical items need to be acquired during the study of CE course. This is probably due to a common view in China that because of the early start of English language learning as most children start learning English at the kindergarten underlying the consistent teacher-centered and grammar-focused instruction, the CE students might have been presupposed to have a big stock of grammatical knowledge in their mind after this long-term investment of energy in grammar domain.

5.3.2 Target requirements underpinning three different levels

The analysis in this section is intended to illustrate the potential logic underlying the requirements in the CECR 2007 that the performance of language skills in a set of situations is based on the view that mastery of language functions is the foundation of all the behaviors and functions. This is referred to the approaches to designing competence-based syllabus, situational syllabus, skill-based syllabus, functional syllabus, and lexical syllabus (see Brindley, 1989; Brown, 1994a; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1990 and so on).

This syllabus preset three levels of requirements for the CE students with hope for them to meet a certain level after a period of time (See Appendix I, Section 2). From this point of view, these requirements are much like the specific curriculum objectives. Despite focusing

on the content and the process of teaching and learning, this syllabus lists a series of linguistic competencies as the measurable outcomes.

On one hand, the students' abilities of applying various language skills into situations commonly encountered in everyday life are seriously taken into account in this syllabus. Hence, in this part's analysis, the description of behavioral objectives proposed by Mager (1962) is taken for reference. The relative terms are: performance, an objective saying what a learner is expected to do; condition, an objective describing the important conditions under which the performance is to occur; and criterion, an objective describing how well the learner must be able to perform in order to be considered acceptable. On the other hand, this syllabus shares some certain characteristics of Threshold level syllabus (Van Ek & Trim, 1998), since mastery of language functions for threshold level is firmly emphasized in these requirements. For example, language functions are briefly summarized as (a) imparting and seeking factual information, (b) expressing and finding out attitudes, (c) deciding on courses of action, (d) socializing, (e) structuring discourse and (f) communication repair (See Appendix I, Page 2).

Only are the requirements of speaking skill in Section II of CECR 2007 taken as a sample to be analyzed in this section. This is, firstly, due to the spatial limitation of this thesis and secondly, due to the long-term public complaints of CE students' weakness in speaking (Yan & Wu, 2002). As well, a rather specific description of the requirements of the other skills and translation, which is originally designed to provide specific standards for self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment, can be found in the attachments to the CECR 2007 (See Appendix II-III, Page 14-19).

First of all, from the perspective of the description of behavioral objectives proposed by Mager (1962), the specific three-level requirements of speaking in this document (see Appendix I, Page 2) are adapted into the following table 5.3.2.1.

Apparently, as shown in the table 5.3.2.1, the objectives required at each level are focused on the development of students' competencies of language use, even though some descriptions of the actions listed above are quite general and tend to overlap, for example, '*communicate in English*', '*deliver papers*', '*give short talks*' and so on. In other words, it is the actions themselves that are treated as the standards to measure the students' CE levels. That implies that, if the students were able to accomplish these required actions, they would be considered passing. Moreover, it is worth noticing in this table that the conditions or situations, in which the target language is performed, are gradually shifted from the classroom concerns like '*in the course of learning*', '*on a given theme*', '*about everyday topics*', etc. into the real-world concerns like '*on general or specialized topics*', '*of extended texts or speeches*',

'*at academic conference*' and so on. This does not only imply the contextual change of language use or the range extension of language items, but significantly the transformation from instructive performance of language functions in the classroom to free performance in the academic fields, along with which is the improvement of the learners' lexical knowledge and autonomous learning. It could be predicted that the students at Level 3 would very possibly have more exposure to subject matter based or content based instruction and the vocabulary required would be more professionalized.

Table 5.3.2.1

	Speaking	Performance/Behavior	Condition/Situation	Criterion
Level 1	Students should be able to communicate in English in the course of learning, to conduct discussions on a given theme, and to talk about everyday topics in English. They should be able to give, after some preparation, short talks on familiar topics with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation. They are expected to be able to use basic conversational strategies in dialogue.	To communicate in English; To conduct discussions; To talk about everyday topics; To give ..short talks; To use basic conversational strategies.	In the course of learning; On a given theme; About everyday topics; After some preparation; In dialogue; On familiar topics.	Clear; Basically correct; Basic.
Level 2	Students should be able to hold conversations in fairly fluent English. They should, by and large, be able to express their personal opinions, feelings and views, to state facts and reasons, and to describe events with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation.	To hold conversations; To express personal opinions; To state facts and reasons; To describe events;	No	Fairly fluent; Clear; Basically correct.
Level 3	Students should be able to conduct dialogues or discussions with a certain degree of fluency and accuracy on general or specialized topics, and to make concise summaries of extended texts or speeches in fairly difficult language. They should be able to deliver papers at academic conferences and participate in discussions.	To conduct dialogues or discussions; To make summaries; To deliver papers; To participate in discussions.	On general or specialized topics; Of extended texts or speeches; At academic conference;	Fluency; Accuracy; Concise; Fairly difficult;

Secondly, competence-based language teaching, which was proposed by Schneck (1978) and Grognet & Crandall (1982), has much in common with such a behavior-based approach because it also emphasizes the development of the students' abilities to apply basic and other skills into the situations in everyday life. Docking (1994) points out the relationship between competence and performance that a unit of competencies might be a task, a role or a function, which will change over time and vary from context to context, and an element of competence can be defined as any attribute of an individual that contributes to the successful performance of a function in an academic setting. In fact, all the required communicative abilities or competencies, such as the abilities '*to conduct discussions*' and '*to express personal opinions*' as shown in the above table, are conveniently and conventionally measured with the observable action of various language functions.

Underlying the principles of Threshold level syllabus design (Van Ek & Trim, 1998), the table 5.3.2.1 could be transformed into the subsequent table 5.3.2.2, in which language behaviors or actions are categorized into different types of functions so as to figure out the potential philosophies underpinning these requirements.

Table 5.3.2.2

	Imparting and seeking factual information	Expressing and finding out attitudes	Deciding on courses of action	Socializing	Structuring discourse	Communication repair
Level 1	Answer questions; Report time, inquire about price, give telephone number and E-mail;		Give directions, doing shopping, leave messages, and make requests;	Introduction; Simple conversation;	Exchange opinions; Initiate, maintain and close a conversation;	Ask for repetition;
Level 2	Ask difficult questions; Tell a complete story; Describe personal experiences;	Agree or disagree; Express personal emotions; Express wishes and hopes;	Give directions, make explanations;		Maintain conversations or discussions; Give personal opinions;	
Level 3		Express personal emotions and wishes;	Give extended explanations;	Attracting audience attention;	Maintain conversations or discussions; Make summaries; Express opinions; Maintain enthusiasm; Adjusting the relationship with other speakers;	

At Level 1 and Level 2, the language function of imparting and seeking factual information is clearly given much weight because the behaviors in it are probably involved with basic

language use, particularly the use of basic words, chunks, collocations, patterns and prefabricated expressions. These language items are usually more frequent than the others in everyday life so it is in line with the basic and intermediate status of these two levels, that is, language in use is mainly to support the process of classroom teaching and learning other than free communication (Ellis, 2004). Additionally, at all three levels, the language function of structuring discourse is obviously put into emphasis. Especially, at Level 3, in order to successfully manage this function, integrative use of knowledge, skills and communicative competencies must be in demand, which also implies that, according to Lewis (1993) and Willis (1990), mastery of sufficient vocabulary would be a must for the students.

Moreover, in this table, the function of communication repair (Donato, 1994; Gibbons, 2002; Mercer, 1995; Rogoff, 1995) is only required at the level 1 and simplified as '*asking for repetition*'. Communication repair is an essential way to elicit meaning negotiation, awareness rising, cooperative learning, and scaffolding, and widely argued to be a significant approach to language acquisition and in particular lexical acquisition by many researchers (like Krashen, 1985; Schmidt, 1994; Long, 1990a; Skehan, 1998; Lewis, 1993; Willis, 1990; Gass, 2003; Halliday, 1985; Lantolf, 2000; Ellis &Takashima, 1999). In this syllabus, communication repair is surprisingly ignored. This might be a little bit contradictory to its repeated emphasis of learner autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 3, scaffolding (Lier, 2004) and learner autonomy (Nunan, 2004) could be put into practice as the key approaches to innovating lexis teaching and learning and thereafter activating the evolution of the whole CE curriculum development.

In conclusion, throughout the above analysis, it is evident that the three-level target requirements in this syllabus are in fact the preset objectives as well as outcomes of the CE course. At different levels, the students are required to put a series of different language performances or behaviors into operation in different situations and meanwhile different language functions will be taken into application. If the CE classroom implementation were built up on this experimental or risk-taking learning process (Willis, 1990), credibly, learner autonomy would be cultivated and also lexis as the combination of meaning and form (Lewis, 1997) would be acquired naturally (Skehan, 1983). Simultaneously, in order to fulfill these requirements at different levels, accumulation of lexical items and development of lexical competencies are crucial and according to Ellis (2012), in the process of focus-on-form language instruction, the first duty of the teacher is to help the students to master some necessary lexical abilities so as to elicit the self-directed learning through scaffolding (Lier, 2004; Nunan, 2004).

5.4 Features of a new model of CE teaching and learning in CECR 2007

The philosophy of this so-called new model of CE teaching and learning as stated in the CECR 2007 document is actually borrowed from the approach of Computer Assisted Language Learning widely abbreviated as CALL, under which the aim is to help students become capable users, information seekers, problem solvers and decision-makers with the aid of modern information technology. It might be a good hope that the students would take use of technology to collect and process information from a variety of sources and thereby elicit and enhance their autonomous learning. As well, the teacher's classroom workload could be tremendously reduced.

As the supporters to introducing information technology into language teaching and learning, Warschauer, et al. (2000) listed four advantages of Internet-based approach: authenticity (authentic materials, communication and publishing); literacy (development of reading and writing skills); vitality (motivation of communicative needs); empowerment (cultivation of autonomy and cooperation). To some extent, all these elements are likely to be the reflected principles underlying this new model, which is in pursuit of the successful combination of classroom-based and computer-based CE teaching and learning to create an input-rich and autonomous learning context. The classroom-based instruction can be viewed as a preparation for individual learning through computer or Internet outside the classroom and its main function seems to train the students in self-directed learning (See Appendix I, Page 9). Hurd argued that 'if learners are not trained for autonomy, no amount of surrounding them with resources will foster in them that capacity for active involvement and conscious choice, although it might appear to do so' (Hurd, 1998:72).

However, in face of the reality of '*the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching*' as a result of '*the marked increase in student enrolments and the relatively limited resources*' as stated in the section of Teaching Model in this document (see Appendix I, Page 2), unsurprisingly, it is still questionable whether the introduction of '*computer- and classroom-based teaching models*' '*built on modern information technology, particularly network technology*' (see Appendix I, Page 2) into CE curriculum development would bring any changes into the traditional classroom discourse. As well, it is a question so far whether the students would work well alone on CE learning, merely depending on the computer or Internet. Reinders (2007), for example, found that the students, who were given access to an on-line self-access system including a variety of tools (such as needs analyses and learning plans) and support structures (such as guided instructions and automated prompts and reminders), made use of the system in limited ways and often only used a small selection of the materials without adequate planning, monitoring and revising.

The CALL is not the focus of this thesis so it is not meaningful to make any further discussion of it. Moreover, according to the above discussion, the author does not think that the development of learner autonomy could be oversimplified as to leave the students to the machine, even though the Internet based approach evidently brings a series of positive effects into the textbook design as discussed in Chapter 4 and improves the CE curriculum development at a certain degree. For instance, in Appendix I (Page 9), it is stated that the Internet-based '*model places a premium on individualized teaching and independent learning and makes full use of the special function of computers in assisting learners with repeated language practice, especially with training in listening and speaking abilities*'. Furthermore, '*to implement the computer-based English learning, the teacher's role of face-to-face coaching should be stressed*' and '*in principle, at least one hour of coaching should be offered after every 16 to 20 hours of student learning*' (see Appendix I, Page 9). In the author's opinion, this potentially implies two concerns at least. First, is the teacher skillful of Information Technology enough to guide the students to manage their self-directed learning on the Internet? Second, is it affordable in the underdeveloped areas of China to construct the Internet-access classrooms for the students?

Therefore, only one point needs emphasizing that the Internet-based approach, if being an essential means to assist CE teaching and learning, might be valuable in some aspects like supplement of authentic materials and so on (Warschauer, et al, 2000). But, over-dependence on it, for instance, exaggeration of its role in development of learner autonomy, is unreasonable. The effects of Internet-based CE teaching and learning are still unforeseeable as well (Reinders, 2007).

5.5 Expected outcomes of CE course-the summary of the CECR 2007 analysis

According to the explanation of the preset objectives and the features of CE curriculum in Section 1 of the CECR 2007 document, the major components of CE course are language knowledge and practical skills and the goals are to '*develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking*', '*enhance their ability to study independently*', and '*improve their general cultural awareness*' (See Appendix I, Section 1). As to the development of cultural awareness, there are rarely specific requirements, so it might only be a concern but not a focus in this syllabus. Based on the principle that objectives should be consistent with outcomes in syllabus design (Brown, 1995), the outcomes of the CE course could be divided into three dimensions: accumulation of language knowledge (mainly referring to lexical property), development of language skills (four macro linguistic skills as well as translation) and cultivation of learner autonomy (a new model with assistance of the computer and Internet).

First of all, lexical knowledge has been substantially emphasized in this syllabus as discussed above in this chapter. Lewis (1993) argued that along with their associated grammar, a huge assortment of memorized words, phrases, and collocations construct the body of language knowledge. At each of the three-level requirements in this syllabus, not only is vocabulary size made a point, but active word knowledge and collocations (or phrases) are stressed as well. This is potentially a reflection of Lewis's philosophy of the nature of language as mentioned in Chapter 3 that words and chunks establish the repertoire of language system and a meaning-focused syllabus must be lexis-based (Lewis, 1993, 1997).

Secondly, this syllabus is evidently skill-based, as illustrated in the preset requirements, so that the behavior or performance of language functions is focused. Development of listening and speaking is put into focus, which is due to its being ignored for long in the CE teaching and learning history on one hand and the changing ideologies underpinning the CE pedagogy on the other. The learning process is intended on the basis of classroom scaffolding (Lier, 2004), which emphasis is put on Learner-centeredness (Tudor, 1992), Interaction (Long, 1983), and Output (Swain, 1985). Definitely, all these principles or approaches would potentially enhance the development of language skills in the CE classroom.

Finally, cultivation of learner autonomy required in this syllabus is quite reliable on the Internet-based approach. The details of this will be discussed in the textbook analysis of Chapter 6. However, learner autonomy is not simply restricted to that. It is concerned with what role the individual learner should play in directing their own leaning inside or outside the classroom (Alford & Pachler, 2007; Benson, 2000; Breen, 2001; Conacher, & Kelly-Holmes, 2007) and what aspects of the classroom instruction could raise the learner responsibility. Sometimes, it seems as if autonomy has become a catch-all term (Benson, 2007), comprising other concepts such as motivation (Ushioda, 2011), awareness (Lier, 1996), and interaction (Kohonen, 1992). Generally, in order to develop their learner autonomy, as indicated in this syllabus, the CE students need much coaching or training.

Conclusively, the analysis in this chapter shows that the CECR 2007 is a Hybrid syllabus. The focus on lexis-based and skill-based teaching and learning in addition of translation illustrates its 'product' orientation but the emphasis of learner-centeredness and learner autonomy indicates that the process or meaning focused instruction is indeed put in light in this syllabus. This new trend of CE curriculum development is partially consistent with Van Lier's (2004) summary of the central features of scaffolding (such as contextual support and inter-subjectivity) and Nunan's (2004) perceptions of learner awareness as ever discussed in Chapter 3. Moreover, along with the proposal of the new classroom-and Internet-based teaching model, this syllabus would '*by no means call for changes in teaching methods and*

approaches only, but, more important, consist of changes in teaching philosophy and practice, and in a shift from a teacher-centered pattern, in which knowledge of the language and skills are imparted by the teacher in class only, to a student-centered pattern, in which the ability to use the language and the ability to learn independently are cultivated in addition to language knowledge and skills' (see Appendix Is, Page 7). The potentials of these changes might be the basic principles of classroom instruction proposed by Rod Ellis in 1994 that classroom interaction should be facilitated and the teacher should play a role of learning-instructor whose duty is to help the learners to proceed along their build-in syllabus (Ellis, 1994).

Chapter 6   Textbook Analysis: *New Horizon College English*

6.1   Introduction

Through the analysis in Chapter 5, it has been implied that the main challenges to the innovation of CE classroom implementation are related to the application of the new model of CE teaching and learning required in CECR 2007. Based on this, the textbook, *New Horizon College English,* was designed and compiled, as one of the optional teaching materials provided for general HEIs in China.

Here is an extra point to explain. According to the author's observation of CE curriculum development as well as the particularism of the educational system in China (see Chapter 2), textbook selection was conventionally an official behavior made by the university authorities and the teachers rarely had a say in this process. After 2007, with the promotion of the CE syllabus regarding the analysis in Chapter 5, this situation has grown a little better. The teacher's beliefs and the learners' needs have been taken into consideration in material selection and also the new textbook has been designed to offer the teacher more freedom to make decisions of what to teach and how to teach in purpose of facilitating the CE learning up to the hilt. This will be one of the points to be analyzed in this chapter.

Furthermore, Nunan made a generalization of selective standards of a course book: 'When selecting commercial materials it is important to match the materials with the goals and objectives of the program, and to ensure that they are consistent with one's beliefs about the nature of language and learning, as well as with one's learners' attitudes, beliefs and preferences' (1999:12). In Nunan's argument, this 'one's beliefs' would mainly refer to the teacher's beliefs, 'the nature of language and learning' would refer to the approaches to language teaching and learning and the 'learners' attitudes, beliefs and preferences' would refer to learner-centeredness or learner autonomy according to Tudor (1992) and Benson (2007). This implies that the textbook NHCE might be a critical factor affecting the implementation of the new model of CE teaching and learning and represent the trend of CE curriculum development in China.

Therefore, the analysis in this chapter is at least focused on three points: at the first place, how do the materials support the goals of the new teaching model? (What is the role of the teacher? and of the learner?); at the second place, how is language presented to be learned?

(What has been selected? How has it been sequenced? and How graded?); at the third place, how is the development of learner autonomy supported?. During the analysis, all the questions proposed in Chapter 4 will be covered.

Accordingly, the structure of this analysis will be constructed on the general-to-specific principle. The first part is of the overall analysis of the consistency between the syllabus and the textbook. The second part is focused on the specific analysis of the examples selected from Unit 2 in the main textbook *Reading and Writing* (Book 1) and the third part is of the analysis of the matching Unit 2 in the other main textbook *Listening and Speaking* (Book 1). Finally, still the corresponding sample Book1 in the on-line course will be scanned in order to analyze the potential Internet-based approach to self-directed learning.

6.2 Overall consistency between CECR 2007 and NHCE

Based on the analysis and discussion of CECR 2007 in Chapter 5 and particularly the three-level requirements of development of CE knowledge and skills, it would be possibly found out that what is emphasized and innovated principally lies in three dimensions: first, four macro skills, especially listening and speaking, as 'the most necessary skills for communicative needs' (Lantolf, 2000:80); second, lexis as the basis of language system to learn (Lewis, 1993); third, learner autonomy (Benson, 2007) underpinned with the Internet-based approach as a potential to innovate CE teaching and learning. With the guidance of CECR 2007, this textbook is likely to be designed and compiled on the basis of these three dimensions.

6.2.1   Development of language skills

According to Jeremy Harmer (1998), if we hope what the learners learnt in the classroom is the language they are able to use in the real life, receptive and productive skills should be combined and developed in the course book as in the real life. Via a systematic link between the tasks in the main textbooks, the exercises in the workbooks and the supplementary materials such as Online Course, CD-ROM, and so on, in this course-book of NHCE, integration of receptive and productive skills - connection between input and output or interaction between knowledge and competence, is evidently focused. What's more, the traditional way of developing a single language skill in isolation has nearly gone. Overviewing the NHCE, these potential principles could be found well applied in term of organization of the materials. These materials and their potential links are presented in Table 6.2.1.

Table 6.2.1

Skills	Textbook	Workbook	Supplement
Reading Writing Translating	*Reading & Writing* (and *T's Book*)	*Extensive Reading* *Speed Reading* *Integrative Training*	Tapes; CD-ROM; Online Course; Test bank; Language corpus.
Listening Speaking	*Listening & Speaking* (and *T's Book*)	Nothing here.	

As shown in this table, the main textbooks of NHCE are composed of *Reading & Writing* (attached with *Teacher's Book*) and *Listening & Speaking* (attached with *Teacher's Book*). The first main textbook is engaged with the development of the skills of reading, writing and translation, which is constructed on text-based input and output and task-based approaches. The other provides the students with a training of listening and speaking skills. The tasks in each unit are preset to circle a central subject in consistency with the matching unit in the textbook *Reading & Writing*. The details of this will be discussed in analysis of the sample units subsequently. This not only reinforces the collaborative use of these main textbooks but the integrative development of four macro-skills as well.

The workbooks include *Extensive Reading*, *Speed Reading*, and *Integrative Training*, of which the former two are aimed at providing the students with more opportunities to extend their cultural horizon, accumulating their vocabulary knowledge and improving their reading skills. The empirical practice of vocabulary, grammar, translation and reading skills is the point of the workbook, *Integrative Training*.

The supplementary materials comprise Tapes, CD-ROM, Online Course, Test Bank and Language Corpus. In accordance with the requirements of the new model of CE teaching and learning set in CECR 2007, these supplementary materials, especially Online Course, are mainly used to support the students' self-directed learning and the teacher will be given an access to observing, evaluating, suggesting and assessing this type of learning simultaneously.

According to the organization of NHCE materials, integrative development of all four macro-skills in addition of translation has been given much attention even if the attention is not allocated in a balanced way. For example, as seen from the above table, there is no workbook attached to the main textbook, *Listening & Speaking*. In fact, most NHCE materials

are still focused on development of reading skills and lexical knowledge. Moreover, writing evidently attracts more attention than speaking because of the support of various workbooks. This implies that this course-book series may not yet find a way to make the CE classroom more communicative. Nevertheless, the innovation of CE teaching and learning reflected in the NHCE materials is obvious in comparison with the traditional Chinese CE textbooks, which are merely based on Grammar-Translation. The details of this will be analyzed subsequently in the sample units from the main textbooks of NHCE. From whole see, the organization of NHCE materials is undoubtedly consistent with the requirements of skill-based teaching and learning set in CECR 2007.

6.2.2   Language input: Comprehension underpinning lexical acquisition

   As mentioned in analysis of the document of CECR 2007, CE curriculum has been developed under the guidance of lexis-focused approaches. In the main textbooks of NHCE, each of them is attached with a word-counting chart as shown in the figure 6.2.2.1 (Word Counting of Book1, *Reading and Writing*), which is consistent with the multi-leveled requirements of vocabulary size in CECR 2007 and potentially indicates that language input in these textbooks is particularly focused on lexical acquisition through reading and listening comprehension.

Word Counting

单元	一般要求词汇	较高要求词汇	更高要求词汇	超纲词汇	生词总量	课文长度	生词占课文的比率	积极词汇	派生词
1A	29	0	0	0	29	721W	4.02%	16	4
1B	35	1	0	0	36	725W	4.96%	30	4
2A	27	1	1	2	31	726W	4.27%	14	3
2B	30	2	4	3	39	715 W	5.45%	25	5
3A	42	0	0	0	42	714 W	5.88%	25	6
3B	33	0	0	0	33	672 W	4.91%	17	4
4A	28	2	0	2	32	705W	4.54%	17	5
4B	38	1	1	0	40	686W	5.83%	26	5
5A	45	1	1	1	48	707 W	6.79%	24	7
5B	27	1	0	2	30	708 W	4.24%	17	3
6A	34	0	0	1	35	704W	4.97%	16	8
6B	27	2	0	3	32	743W	4.31%	20	3
7A	43	4	1	1	49	692 W	7.08%	18	9
7B	31	2	0	0	33	698 W	4.73%	19	4
8A	39	0	0	2	41	710 W	5.77%	23	6
8B	37	1	0	1	39	722 W	5.40%	23	5
9A	31	1	0	0	32	684 W	4.68%	19	3
9B	27	1	0	0	28	738W	3.79%	15	7
10A	39	2	0	0	41	594 W	6.90%	23	4
10B	39	1	1	3	44	550 W	8.00%	22	5
合计	681	23	9	21	734	A+B=13914W	5.27%	408	100

注：全书积极词汇量（409）=一般要求积极词汇（406）+较高要求积极词汇（3）

(Figure 6.2.2.1)

(Translation: In the first row, the Chinese items are sequentially *'Unit', 'Vocabulary at the basic level', 'Vocabulary at the intermediate level', 'vocabulary at the higher level', 'Vocabulary beyond the requirements', 'Total number of new words', 'Text length', 'Proportion of new words', 'Active words',* and *'Derivatives'*. In the last row, the Chinese phrase means *'Total'*. At the bottom of this chart, translation of the Chinese statement is *'Note: Amount of active vocabulary (409) = active words at the basic level (406) + active words at the intermediate level (3)'*.)

First of all, to be clarified necessarily, the starting point of CE vocabulary learning is founded on the retrieval of 2228 words that the students have already learnt in their secondary schools and the number of active words among them is 1087 (see Chapter 5, analysis of vocabulary size). The CE beginner learners have already been able to read the text at a certain length. As exemplified in the figure 6.2.2.1, the text length is set between 550 and 721 words and throughout the whole book, nearly 1,3914 words would be encountered repeatedly. This will definitely increase the activeness of old words and in the meantime stimulate the acquisition of new words.

Moreover, new vocabulary size is preset on the basis of the requirements of CECR 2007. Totally, the amount of new vocabulary in this book is 734 (including 409 active words), among which, the number of words at the basic level is 681 (including 406 active words and 275 inactive words); at the intermediate level is 23 (including 3 active words and 20 inactive words); at higher level is 9. The rest 21 words are beyond the requirements. In addition, there are also 100 derivatives in this book. Thus, it is clearly seen that vocabulary learning in this book is designed to mainly fulfill the Level 1 requirements in CECR 2007. In fact, the same design could be found in all the other main textbooks of NHCE so it is could be judged that the requirements at the basic level in CECR 2007 formulate the design and implementation of this course-book series and lexis including word formation is the major content of the target language input.

Finally, the researchers like Nation (2006), McCarthy (1990), Laufer (1997), Cunningsworth (1995), through their long-time studies and experiments, meet a common viewpoint that the more new words in a text does not mean the better effect of lexis learning and instead there should be a certain proportional relation between text length and new vocabulary amount. If the text is too long, the operational difficulty will be stronger. If too short, the students will have a hardship of comprehension because of the over-concentration of new words and even lose their interest in reading. As shown in Figure 6.2.2.1, the length of each text is controlled at about 700 words and the ratio between text length and new vocabulary amount is 5.27% approximately. Throughout *Reading and Writing* Book 1-4, the

text length is properly controlled. On average, each text in Book 1 includes around 700 words, in Book 2 around 800 words and in Book 3 and 4 around 900 words. The average ratio between text length and new vocabulary amount through all four books is approximately 4.06%. This shows that in NHCE reading and writing textbooks, the ratio between text length and new vocabulary amount is set at a reasonable range so that comprehension and lexical acquisition could reach a balance.

On the other side, in the main textbook *Listening and Speaking*, in order to focus the students' concentration on comprehension of listening content, forms and meanings of the key new words, which would possibly affect understanding of the listening materials, are presented on the page and this may also raise lexical awareness to some extent. For instance, on Page 18 of Unit 2 in Book1, a couple of new words and phrases including their Chinese meanings are presented explicitly, as shown in Figure 6.2.2.2 (Illustration of support for listening task from NHCE, Unit 2, Pre-listening task).
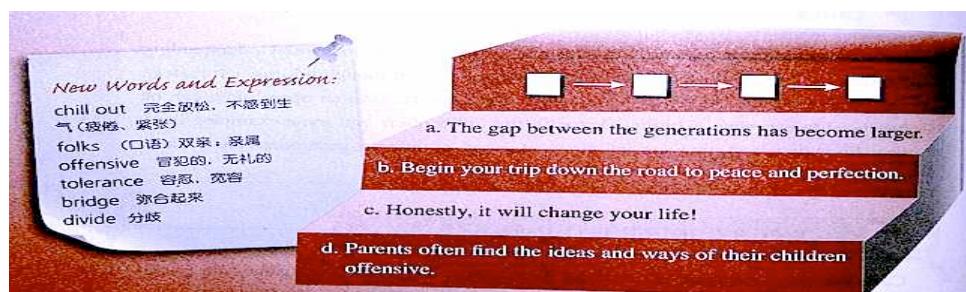
(Figure 6.2.2.2)

Through the analysis in this section, to be illustrated is only one point that lexis as the basis of CE language system composed the major content of teaching and learning in this course-book series. All the tasks in the main textbooks of NHCE are designed and compiled to foster the input of lexical items as well as the development of four macro-skills. Lexical acquisition facilitates skill-based learning and conversely skill-based learning improves lexical acquisition. Thereby, according to Lewis (1993), the students' integrative language proficiency and competence would be cultivated and promoted, and as well, according to Krashen (1985), comprehensible input is one of the underpinning principles with this approach. The details of the essence of lexis in NHCE will be discussed in the analysis of the sample units below.

6.2.3   On-line Course

This On-line Course is obviously underpinned with the principles of Internet-based approach to CE teaching and learning, which have been given sufficient discussion and analysis in Chapter 4 and 5. As well, the author's attitude to the effects of the On-line Course

on the development of self-directed learning is conservative and this has been firmly stated in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, according to the document of CECR 2007 that '*colleges and universities should remold the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching by introducing computer- and classroom-based teaching models*', this On-line course as a response to this requirement is undoubtedly an attempt to implement the new model of CE teaching and learning as discussed in Chapter 5. In this section, some typical features of the On-line Course of NHCE will be listed in order to confirm the consistency between NHCE and CECR 2007 in the aspect of autonomous learning tendency.

At first, On-line Course of NHCE is more or less a composition of electronic copies of the main textbooks, the teacher's books and the workbooks and this will be straightly seen from the specific analysis below based on the photocopies of the website. Secondly, an integrative self-directed learning system is well established in this course including planning, learning and assessing. Thirdly, created materials such as tasks and exercises from the textbooks or the workbooks are collaborated with authentic materials such as countless live information from the Internet. Fourthly, limitation of time and space is broken up, which means that the students could take the on-line learning anytime and anywhere if they have access to the Internet. Fifthly, interactive and cooperative learning is facilitated through the spontaneous on-line communication with the teacher or the other students. Sixthly, formative assessment is in preference of ultimate assessment by means of the teacher's continuous track of the students' on-line learning process. Last but not least, it provides the students with convenience to preview and review what they learnt in the classroom and this type of repeated learning could also increase the encounters with language items so as to reinforce awareness and acquisition (Schmidt, 1993).

In general, one of the greatest advantages of this On-line Course is to provide teachers and learners with a source of rich materials (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). The availability of plentiful information resources on Internet means that the students could be sent to the computer to prepare for and conduct all sorts of tasks and project work with reference to textbooks or to find out the topics they are interested in (Hutchinson & Whitehouse, 1986). Teachers can also take use of Internet or the online courses to download the updated teaching materials in order to adapt and enrich their teaching content. See the website: http://www.nhce.edu.cn. Some features of On-line Course of NHCE will be illustrated in analysis of the examples from on-line Book1 subsequently.

6.3   Specific analysis of Unit 2 from *Reading and Writing* (Book1)

6.3.1   Textbook content

The textbook *Reading & Writing* (1) altogether consists of ten units and all of them are structured in the same way. The first part is Preview, a task of reading comprehension, in which a short passage about the unit subject is included. Preview can be used as a pre-session task as well as a reference for the summary writing-the post-session task. After that, the unit comes into two divisions, Section A and Section B, each of which includes a text and a series of exercises (See the following figure 6.3.1.1, The Contents, Page 3 of Book 1, Unit 1 and Unit 2).

Contents

Unit 1	1
Section A	2
Text: Learning a Foreign Language	2
Exercises	8
Section B	17
Reading Skills: Finding Out Word Meanings	17
Text: Keys to Successful Online Learning	19
Exercises	24
Unit 2	27
Section A	28
Text: Deep Concern	28
Exercises	34
Section B	42
Reading Skills: Distinguishing Between Facts and Opinions	42
Text: Is There a Generation Gap?	43
Exercises	49

(Figure 6.3.1.1)

6.3.2   Sequence of Tasks

Exercises or tasks in Section A are arranged in the sequence of: Pre-reading Activity (one item), Text Comprehension (two items), Vocabulary (three items including Banked Cloze), Sentence Structure (two items), Translation (C-to-E and E-to-C), Cloze (one item), Text Structure Analysis (one item), and Structured Writing (one item), and Section B includes the

following exercises in sequence: Reading Skills (one item), Text Comprehension (one item), and Vocabulary (two items). They are specifically presented in Table 6.3.2.1.

Table 6.3.2.1 Sequence of Tasks in Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, Section A and B

Section A	Pre-Reading	Listening and discussion
	Text Comprehension	1. Colloquially answer questions based on text content understanding
		2. Oral discussion based on personal experiences
	Vocabulary	1. Blank filling with content words
		2. Blank filling with function words
		3. Banked cloze
	Sentence Structure	1. Syntactic structure transformation
		2. Use of lexical patterns
	Translation	1. Chinese to English translation
		2. English to Chinese translation
	Cloze	Blank filling with content words, function words and chunks
	Text Structure Analysis	Genre analysis of the text
	Structured Writing	Modeled writing
Section B	Reading Skills	Reading strategies
	Comprehension of the Text	Multiple Choice Questions based on text content comprehension
	Vocabulary	1. Blank filling with content words
		2. Blank filling with function words

All these tasks or exercises are closely related to text-based comprehension, that is, receptive skills, mainly reading skills in this textbook, are focused, but productive skills, in particular writing skills, are also included as follow up to the reading. For instance, the exercises or tasks of Text Structure Analysis and Structured Writing are actually interdependent and the former is focused on analysis of genre features of one or a few sample paragraphs from the text but the latter is involved with passage writing in accordance with the outline drawn out of the sample paragraph from the text. See Figure 6.3.2.1 and 6.3.2.2, which show the task for text structure analysis and a model for structured writing.

Text Structure Analysis

A Paragraph of Sequenced Order of Events

The writer presents what Sandy did on a weekday morning through a sequenced order, describing a series of actions according to the time when they happened. Please have a look at Paragraph 1.

Para. 1

The radio clicked on. Rock music blasted forth. Like a shot, the music woke Sandy. She looked at the clock; it was 6:15 A.M. Sandy sang along with the words as she lay listening to her favorite radio station.

Time markers	Events in sequenced order
	The radio clicked on. Rock music blasted forth.
	Like a shot, the music woke Sandy.
It was 6:15 A.M.	She looked at the clock.
	Sandy sang along with the words as she lay listening to her favorite radio station.

(Figure 6.3.2.1: Text Structure Analysis, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp. 40)

Structured Writing

Look at the following sample of a paragraph with sequenced order of events.

Topic:
Holding a birthday party for a classmate
Series of actions:
- prepare a gift
- light candles
- turn off light
- sing birthday song
- make a wish
- cut and share cake

Sample Paragraph

It was one of our classmates' birthday yesterday. We had a birthday party for him. Before going to the party, each of us prepared a gift. At the beginning of the party, we lit the candles and turned off the light. Then we sang the birthday song and asked him to make a wish. After that he blew out the candles and cut the birthday cake. We shared the cake and talked about many interesting things. It was a very happy evening we spent.

(Figure 6.3.2.2: Structured Writing, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp. 41)

As shown in these two figures, the task, Text Structure Analysis, is focused on sampling how to state the time sequencing and the task, Structured Writing, is focused on modeling how to state the action sequencing. Obviously, according to Gibbons (2002, 2003), sampling and modeling are taken into use as approaches to scaffolding input and output. In the meantime, lexis is also focused here and immersed in the tasks so that the incidental and intentional exposure to chunks and collocations is increased. For example, the chunks (past-

tense inflexion): 'clicked on', 'blasted forth', 'sang along with' and the collocations like 'prepare a gift' etc. are presented implicitly and explicitly in above two figures.

6.3.3   Word presentation and practice

The essence of lexis to language learning in this textbook has been given sufficient discussion in this chapter and what is supplemented here are just two necessary points, word presentation and practice. Question 2 and 3 proposed in Chapter 4 as the parameters for textbook analysis will be answered in this section.

Probably, as an echo to the requirements of active vocabulary learning in the CECR 2007, the intentional learning of vocabulary has been given a rich and nourishing diet. This diet consists of a number of words that have been selected for active study and it is also a source of incidental learning through exposure. These targeted words are presented in form of lists, in which much information of new words is supplied to the learners, such as lexical forms, pronunciations, definitions, translations, classes, inflexions, chunks, collocations, etc., as shown in the subsequent figures 6.3.3.1 and 6.3.3.2 - Samples of how selected vocabulary is presented:

(Figure 6.3.3.1: Word List, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp. 31)

(Figure 6.3.3.2: Phrase List, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp. 33)

It is interesting to note that Figure 6.3.3.1 presents the word class and inflections, whereas Figure 6.3.3.2 alternative wording for an idiom. The reasons why new vocabulary is presented in this way might originate from the old beliefs in word learning that a large number of words can be learnt from lists in a relatively short time, that mother tongue translation alongside can deal with the meaning conveniently and allow learners to test themselves or one another and that the random order can reduce the chances of getting words confused with each other (Thornbury, 2000). Additionally, learning through lexical field memberships is likely to be triggered as well, since all these words, chunks and collocations come out of the same text and serve the same topic.

Normally, in these materials, vocabulary input is incorporated in three ways as outlined by Thornbury (2004):

1. Segregated in vocabulary sections, for example: Figure 6.3.3.3 vocabulary section from Unit 2, Task 3, Page 34.

Vocabulary

○ **III. Fill in the blanks with the words given below. Change the form where necessary.**

tend	guidance	individual	ruin	admit
response	trend	entitle	curiosity	neglect
concept	evaluate	attitude	confidence	apply
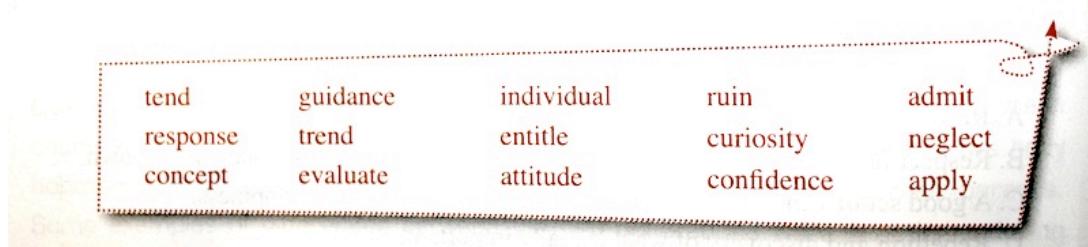
(Figure 6.3.3.3)

2. Integrated into text-based activities, for example: Figure 6.3.3.4 text-based activity from Unit 2, Paragraph 23, Page 29.

23   "No, thanks, honey. My stomach feels **upset**—like it's full of **knots**. It's probably that **awful** music that wakes me up every morning. I don't think I'm old-fashioned, but hearing those **tuneless, offensive lyrics** repeatedly makes my blood boil."

(Figure 6.3.3.4)

All the positions of key new words and language points in the text are specially bolded and tape recordings are also provided as for processing corrective feedback of pronunciation and intonation as well as inspiring the intentional noticing of key words (Schmidt, 2001).

3. Incidentally, as in structure explanations and exercises. For example, in Banked Cloze task, awareness of the link between lexical rules and semantics is unconsciously increased, and the Cloze puts more emphasis on the integrative use of different content words, function words and chunks so as to raise awareness of lexical patterns and collocations. See the following figures 6.3.3.5 and 6.3.3.6.

(Figure 6.3.3.5: Task 5, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp.36)

(Figure 6.3.3.6, Task 10, Unit 2, Book 1, *Reading and Writing*, pp.39)

Generally, as shown from the above analysis of this unit, the consistency between this main textbook and the requirements of CECR 2007 is evident, particularly in aspects of skill development and lexical input. First of all, the tasks are evidently preset in the sequence from reading comprehension through vocabulary learning and implicit input of syntactic knowledge to sample writing as the major type of language output, which indicates that skill-based learning, lexis-based learning, task-based learning, awareness-raising and scaffolding form the framework of potential approaches underpinning design and implementation of this textbook. Secondly, vocabulary is presented in lists and according to Thornbury (2002), this type of presentation is convenient for comprehension and memorization. Also, all new words, phrases, chunks, patterns and collocations are displayed in texts and tasks and implicitly instructed so as to raise the students' awareness of lexical forms and meanings. Finally, Section B is particularly designed for skill-training and lexical practice and ought to be accomplished by the students independently. This might be presupposed to be a support for autonomous learning in this textbook.

6.4   Specific analysis of Unit 2 from *Listening and Speaking* (Book1)

6.4.1   Textbook content

As same as the main textbook *Reading & Writing,* this textbook also consists of 10 units and the tasks in each unit are formatted in a unitary sequence from Warming-Up task through separate and integrative training or practice of listening and speaking to Homework, as shown in the following figure 6.4.1.1:

(Figure 6.4.1.1: Contents of *Listening and Speaking*, Unit1 and Unit2, Book 1)

The organizational relationship of specific tasks is presented in the following table 6.4.1.2:

Focus		
Warming Up		
Listening	Understanding Short Conversations	
	Understanding a Long Conversation	
	Understanding a Passage	
	Understanding a Movie Dialog/Speech	
Speaking	Practicing Conversational Skills	Useful Expressions
		Model Dialogs
		Conversation Activity
	Pair/Group Work	
Listening and Speaking		
Homework	Language Sense Enhancement	
	Supplementary Listening	
	VOA Special English	
	Oral Report	

(Table 6.4.1.2: Relationship of Tasks, from *Listening and Speaking* Book 1, pp.5)

In this table, the content of tasks has been clearly presented and the spirit of this design may be underpinned with the potential principles as followed. First of all, Michael Rost (2002) pointed out that listening skill plays a key role in the language classroom because of the input it offers and without understanding the teacher's instruction, there is no way for the students to start any form of learning, so listening is basically determinative to speaking. Secondly, Rod Ellis (2003) argued that from the pedagogic perspective, listening tasks are of great value to understanding and expressing new content.

Underlying these principles, the ultimate objectives of this textbook ought to meet the occurrence and enforcement of interaction between teacher and student(s) or student and student, the combination of classroom instruction and individual learning, and the integration of self-directed and cooperative learning. To make it clarified, the content of each task will be presented subsequently, based on the photocopies from this sample unit.

6.4.2   Task analysis

First of all, the task 'Focus' in the unit is used to help the students to recognize the key points of this unit: listening strategies, conversational skills, and oral practice. The names of all critical activities have been highlighted such as **Chilling out with the Folks** and so on, in order to offer the students a clue of and make them ready for what they are going to do. Thus, the task 'Focus' mainly plays a role of leading-in as shown in Figure 6.4.2.1 photocopied from Page 17.

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(Figure 6.4.2.1: Focus Task. Unit 2, Book 1, *Listening and Speaking*, pp.17)

Secondly, the content of Warming-Up task is mainly about the brief opening sequence of a radio or TV program, which is always short and clear and gently leads into the topic of the unit. Generally, the materials offered are authentic, as argued by Tomlinson (2011; 2013) that it will provide more exposure to real language. See the transcript of this listening task in Figure 6.4.2.2. The chunk 'Chilling Out with the Folks' is repeated for twice in order to raise the students' awareness and scaffold their comprehension. These approaches are widely argued as discussed in Chapter 3.

(Figure 6.4.2.2, Transcript of Warming-Up Task. Unit 2, Book 1, pp.18)

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Thirdly, the task, 'Listening', is divided into two parts: listening to created materials and listening to authentic materials. For pedagogic purposes, the former is graded from simple to complex and gradually proceeds into the training of listening strategies. It is sequenced from listening to short dialogues through long conversations to passages on the basis of difficulty levels. This kind of grading and sequencing is helpful for the CE beginner learners to adapt themselves to the large amount of listening content in a sudden increase because according to their learning experience in secondary schools, they have rarely attended such a listening and speaking course. Additionally, the students are also required to take use of sorts of strategies like guessing the content from the title, keeping record of key words and so on, in order to enhance their comprehension. After completing the exercises in this part, to moderate difficulty, available are some segments of original English movies, by listening to which, the students will be able to obtain some authentic cultural information, learn some idiomatic expressions, and intentionally imitate some pronunciations and intonations. See the example in Figure 6.4.2.3.

(Figure 6.4.2.3: Movie Speech Understanding. Unit 2, Book 1, pp.22)

Fourthly, the task, 'Speaking', is mainly focused on training the learners to perform language notions and functions. Useful expressions in everyday life, model dialogues and conversation activities are provided and throughout conducting meaningful communication in English as required in CECR 2007 (see Chapter 5), not only could the integrative language skills be developed, but also dictionary meanings as well as discourse meanings of language items could be mastered in the authentic context. Pair/group work is put in light in this task as illustrated in Figure 6.4.2.4 below.

(Figure 6.4.2.4: Pair Work. Unit 2, Book 1, pp. 26)

As shown in this figure, the student is asked to work out a questionnaire together with a partner. In this process, they have to make a discussion and relate it to their own life experiences. According to Long (2011), Nunan (2004), van Lier (2004) and many other researchers, this task is concerned with a series of approaches to language learning like negotiation, interaction, cooperation, scaffolding and so on. As well some new lexical items encountered in this pair work would likely be picked up by the students, from this perspective, what this task is underpinned with might be an incidental learning process.

Fifthly, in the task, 'Listening and Speaking', the procedure of understanding, retelling and discussing a listening passage is actually an attempt to integrate input with output or reception with production in the language learning process. This is consistent with the trend of theoretical development in L2 teaching and learning at present (see Long, 2006; Schmidt, 1993; Skehan, 1998; McCarthy, 1990; Nunan, 2004; Willis, 2007; Lewis, 2002; Harmer, 1998). While retelling the content of the listening passage, the students' attention would be drawn to how to simulate, replicate, recast and improvise (Willis, 2007) some certain language forms and functions out of the listening passage and thereby the noticing process would be involved implicitly (Schmidt, 2001). See an example in Figure 6.4.2.5.

(Figure 6.4.2.5: Listening and Discussion. Unit2, Book 1, pp.27)

Finally, as for the Homework, the students are required to carry on self-directed learning practice. As an aid to this autonomous learning, a series of authentic materials are recommended such as tongue twisters, famous remarks, classic public lectures, VOA (Voice of America) special English, and the like. Besides, there are also a conversation listening, a passage listening and a blank-filling task assigned to the students to complete and after that the students usually have to submit an oral report on a given topic through the on-line system so that the teacher could have an eye on the improvement of their speaking skills.

In summary, through the specific analysis of this main textbook of NHCE, it could be found that all the tasks are focused on skill training and language practicing. In contrast to the traditional classroom instruction, development of language skills is facilitated in the process of interaction, negotiation, cooperation and scaffolding and language items, especially words, chunks, collocations and useful expressions, are learnt implicitly through noticing or awareness-raising in listening and speaking. The teacher plays as a facilitator and self-directed learning is evidently put into focus. Indeed, this is consistent with the requirement in CECR 2007 that the CE classroom should be transformed from the teacher-dominated to the learner-centered.

6.5   Presentation of On-line Course

As aforementioned, the Internet-based learning or the On-line Course of NHCE has been discussed and analyzed sufficiently in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and a section of this chapter. Here presented are just a series of photocopies from Book 1 of *Reading and Writing* and *Listening and Speaking* in this On-line Course, in order to illustrate some statements in the former discussions. The other details of this On-line Course could be found in the website: http://www.nhce.edu.cn.

Firstly, this On-line Course is actually a source of rich materials to provide teachers and learners with plentiful information resources on Internet. As seen from the figure 6.5.1, the students are able to make a connection to the broad Internet world through this website such as broadcasting stations, textbook corpus and so on, but the information in connection is mainly skill-focused and vocabulary-focused, which is more or less consistent with the requirements of CECR 2007 as ever discussed in Chapter 5.

(Figure 6.5.1: Front-page of On-line Course)

Secondly, this On-line Course is a composition of electronic copies of the main textbooks of NHCE to some extent as shown in the following figures 6.5.2 and 6.5.3. One of the aims to make such a design might be for the students to conveniently preview and review what they will and have learnt in the authentic classroom. Another aim might be to push the students to dominate their own learning and this is also required in CECR 2007 (see Chapter 5).

(Figure 6.5.2: *Reading and Writing* of On-line Course, Book1)

(Figure 6.5.3: *Listening and Speaking* of On-line Course, Book 1)

Thirdly, language-learning packages supplied on Internet offer students a chance to study conversations and texts, to do grammar and vocabulary exercises, to listen to texts and to record their own voices. This is factually a self-directed learning system underpinned with learner autonomy as required in CECR 2007 (Chapter 5). See the example in Figure 6.5.4.

(Figure 6.5.4: *Viewing, Listening & Speaking* of NHCE, Book 2, On-line Course)

Fourthly, the attachment of Internet-based packages to NHCE course book series is full of materials and exercises so as to provide the students with more opportunities to enrich their language input and exposure. For example, in Interactive English Dictionary and Vocabulary Learning System, the students are offered an access to larger amounts of vocabulary on line and they can also make self-assessment to judge at what degree they are knowledgeable of some certain words. Thus, further learning strategies could be made. This could not only reinforce the students' lexis learning but also facilitate learner autonomy as required in CECR 2007 (see Chapter 5). See Figure 6.5.5.

(Figure 6.5.5: *Interactive English Dictionary and Vocabulary Learning System*)

Fifthly, another advantage of the Internet platform is that it is a new access to the interaction between the teacher and the students. For example, in Figure 6.5.6, the students could have the real-time answers to any questions related to the coursework if there is a teacher on duty. Moreover, the teacher also has the convenience to observe the students' learning process and organize the assessments. This self-access online course includes all the regular content and features of NHCE textbooks together with an advantage of sending feedback information back to the students at the first time after assessments. For example, in Figure 6.5.7, the student's score in Vocabulary task 1 is 93%.

NEW HORIZON 新视野大学英语 | I Ask 　 王五 2008-08-12 (Tuesday) 　 Home 　 Add Question 　 My Questions 　 Help

Add question

Whom to ask:

19班:	☐ Teacher(s): 王五
vls1-4:	☐ Teacher(s): 王五, shenshen, hh
二版测试班(旧的不用):	☐ Teacher(s): zhaoyb, shenwg, 王五
高教司评估课程测试:	☐ Teacher(s): gh, 王五
视听说全新二班:	☐ Teacher(s): 王五
视听说全新一班:	☐ Teacher(s): taataab, 王五
听说二版第一级:	☐ Teacher(s): gh, 吴建华, test0811test0811, 吴建华, 王五
英语专业:	☐ Teacher(s): testtestdemo, 王五, 吴建华

Category:
阅读

Question:

Submit

(Figure 6.5.6: *Add Question*, On-line Course, Book 1)

首 页　班级注册　个人信息　学校通知　教师社区　教学评估　教学备案　参考资料　客服中心　软件下载　用户指南

课程首页 | 日程安排 | 班级通知 | 面授约课 | 我的作业 | 学习记录 | 学习工具 | 我的班级 | 课程信息 | 课程资源 | 测试与问卷

标题	题型	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9	Unit 10	Average
Passage A												
Vocabulary Task 1	客观	93%	0%	0%	86%	87%	100%	0%		79%	80%	58
Vocabulary Task 2	客观	100%		79%	20%	100%	100%		0%	92%	93%	73
Banked Cloze	客观	100%		10%		100%	100%			0%	0%	52
Cloze	客观	0%	5%	95%		100%	100%			100%	85%	69
Translation Task 1	主观	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	0
Translation Task 2	主观	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	0
Writing Task	主观	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		0
Passage B												
Reading Skill	主/客观	100%	63%	✓	✓	✓	✓			0%	100%	33
Comprehension Task	客观	100%	88%	0%	13%	100%	100%				100%	72
Vocabulary Task 1	客观	100%		0%	88%	87%	100%			64%	60%	71

(Figure 6.5.7: *Feedback*, On-line Course, Book 1)

Sixthly, in contrast to traditional teaching materials, the online supplementary materials provide students with more exposure to authentic information. As argued by Peacock (2001), authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation, provide exposure to real language, and provide authentic cultural information about the target culture. See the example in Figure 6.5.8.

(Figure 6.5.8: Broadcasting Station, On-line Course, Book 1)

Last but not least, just because of students' access to Internet-based learning, they will have more chances to use computers for writing. According to Dudeney (2012), this would bring them a list of benefits:

1. A word-processing package removes the problem of poor handwriting that some students suffer from;

2. A word-processing package allows the component user to edit his or her material at great speed and with great facility;

3. Spellcheckers can ease the task of achieving correct spelling;

4. If students are working in groups, a computer screen can sometimes be far more visible to the whole group than a piece of paper might be;

5. A computer screen frequently allows students to see their writing more objectively and enhance the participation of individuals.

See the following figure 6.5.9: The task, Writing On, from Unit 2 of Book 1, On-line Course.

(Figure 6.5.9: *Writing On*. Unit 2 of Book1, On-line Course)

6.6 Summary

Based on the examples and discussions above, the NHCE materials evidently mirror the requirements outlined in CECR 2007. First of all, lexis as the basis of CE language system is presented and instructed underlying various L2 learning principles according to the analysis of the sample units. Secondly, all main textbooks of NHCE including On-line Course are designed and compiled on the principles of task-based approach and the task grading and sequencing are preset to facilitate the classroom learning and the self-directed learning up to the hilt. Thirdly, various approaches to L2 learning are taken into practice in the main textbooks of NHCE, such as interaction, negotiation, scaffolding and so on, and meanwhile autonomous learning or learner autonomy is fostered and reflected from the NHCE textbook design, the CE classroom is evidently learner-centered with transformation of the teacher's role. Finally, the Internet-based or on-line course provides the teacher and the students with much convenience and rich information resources and, as the supplementary materials, On-line Course is really functional to support the CE classroom implementation.

Moreover, if we look more closely at the content of the two main textbooks of NHCE, it may be found that the tasks are designed underlying various types of syllabi like Ellis' (1997) structural syllabus, Willis' (1990) lexical syllabus, Wilkins' (1976) and Finnochiaro and Brumfit's (1983) proposals for a notional-functional syllabus, and Johnson's (1997) skill

syllabus. All these syllabi are product-focused, as a result of which, these two textbooks inevitably partake of the features of product syllabi. Long (2000) has noted that this kind of product-focused approach often results in inefficient and discouraging learning experience for learners. Production is encouraged in order to practice and produce language units in a rather artificial manner and activities that are not driven by meaning but by a specific structure, lexical unit or function.

Furthermore, NHCE is more or less process-focused as well, since the two main textbooks are based on content, topic and text. For example, meaning is definitely focused in the tasks of Reading Skills, Listening Comprehension etc. Focus-on-meaning or process syllabi are usually accompanied by communicative methods and classroom practices (Krashen, 1985). In the case of the task - Text Structure Analysis as discussed above, the target language items are more effectively learnt if being used as a medium to communicate information that is meaningful to the learner (Long, 2006). In fact, there is apparently an integration of process and product in the two main textbooks and the content of them are organized around both linguistic units and subject matter.

In most language programs, teaching materials or instructional materials are the key component of the classroom process because they generally serve as the basis for much of language input and language practice that occurs in the classroom. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) suggest that for the teachers of English language courses, materials serve the functions as a source of language, a learning support, a means of motivation and stimulation of learner autonomy and a reference. Therefore, NHCE may just seek to provide exposure to lexis as the basis of language, to support learning by stimulating language cognition and progression, to motivate learners with achievable challenges and interesting content, and to develop learner autonomy with various approaches.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

As shown from the title and the entire analysis of the documents in this dissertation, what have been explored in this study are mainly about two issues: the potential approaches to lexis-focused CE teaching and learning and the possible challenges confronting the teachers to implement these approaches into the CE classroom. In addition, some implications for the CE teachers are also the major concerns of the findings and conclusions.

Throughout discussion of the research background in Chapter 2 and analysis in Chapter 5 and 6, vocabulary or lexis teaching and learning is found the focus of the CE classroom practice. First of all, due to consistent influence of the government's needs, English language is rather considered to be a medium of information exchange at the level of national development and thus vocabulary or lexis, especially content words or lexical words argued by Lewis (1993) as the critical language element to shape meaning reception and production, is required to be the focus of CE instruction. Secondly, enlargement of vocabulary size have been given explicit requirements at three levels in CECR 2007, and according to analysis of this document, lexical knowledge and competence are potentially perceived as the basis of development of language skills. Furthermore, underlying the overall consistency between CECR 2007 and NHCE textbooks, all-round development of language skills and mastery of lexical items become the central themes of tasks and activities in these textbooks and grammatical items in a form of lexical patterns, according to Lewis (1997) and Willis (2003), are instructed implicitly in sampling and modeling tasks as a system of subservient rules to support meaning construction.

The essence of lexis to CE curriculum development has been emphasized in CECR 2007 and some aspects of Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993) such as awareness of chunks and collocations, have been reflected in this syllabus, but there is no evidence yet that lexis is identified as the basis of language system or in Lewis' word (1993), language is a grammaticalized lexical system in the CE curriculum. Moreover, development of learner autonomy has been set as one of the final goals and acknowledged as the new trend of CE curriculum development according to the analysis in Chapter 5. As the central concept of the new model of CE teaching and learning with the combination of classroom-and Internet-based approaches, learner autonomy is evidently a catchall term covering every domain of learner-centeredness including self-directedness, interaction, cooperation, negotiation, scaffolding and so on. In general, as for answering the first research question, the findings out

of literature review and documentary analysis of CECR 2007 in this research imply that the potential approaches to lexis-focused CE teaching and learning would be firmly concerned with the refreshed view of the nature of language being a grammaticalized lexical system and the development of learner autonomy.

In the textbook analysis of this research, it is found that the textbook, NHCE, is intensively consistent with the requirements of CECR 2007, which means that the potential approaches indicated in this new national syllabus are well applied in the tasks and activities of this textbook. For example, establishment of On-line Course is typically an experimental attempt of the new CE pedagogic model required in CECR 2007. According to the summary of Chapter 6, the principal features of this textbook are lexis-focused, task-based, learner-centered and Internet-based. Underlying the incommunicative circumstances of CE education in China according to the discussion in Chapter 2, it would be extremely challenging to implement these potential approaches in the CE classroom. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the entire endeavor in this new round reform would be meaningless in the end, but oppositely, if the classroom implementers, the teachers, realized its significance to the innovation of their classroom implementation and renewed their traditional perceptions of what and how they ought to instruct, things would be a little bit different. This is also the final goals of this research, that is, not only to find out the possible challenges but also the implications for the teachers to promote their CE classroom practice.

7.2 Approaches to be implemented in the classroom according to analysis of the CECR 2007 document.

According to the analysis in Chapter 5, lexical property evidently constructs the CE instructional content, which is illustrated in the requirements of vocabulary size and its potential role as the parameter to distinguish the levels of the students' CE proficiency and competence. This implies that as the new trend of CE curriculum development, lexical knowledge might be viewed as the basis of language development and lexical competence might be the prerequisite for the development of language skills. Lewis' Lexical Approach (1993) and Willis' Lexical Syllabus (1990) could be used to underpin this philosophy of CE curriculum development. Moreover, along with the proposal of the new CE pedagogic model and the utilization of Internet-based approach, learner autonomy is put forward as a goal of CE curriculum development. This is concerned with the changing role of teacher and learner in the CE classroom and Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1983), Gibbons' Scaffolding (2002) and Nunan's summary of learner awareness (2004) provide many basic principles to underpin this change.

7.2.1   Lexis-based learning approach

Lewis' Lexical Approach (1993) to language teaching foregrounds vocabulary learning, both in the form of individual, high frequency words, and in the form of word combinations or chunks, according to the comment of Thornbury (2002). Furthermore, in Willis' (2003) designing principles of a lexical syllabus, he argued that a lexical approach to language teaching derives from the principles: 1. A syllabus should be organized around meanings; 2. The most frequent words encode the most frequent meanings; 3. Words typically co-occur with other words; and 4. These co-occurrences or chunks are an aid to fluency.

Based on these arguments of Lexical Approach and review of the analysis in Chapter 5, even though the CECR 2007 document could by no means be attributed to a typical lexical syllabus, its emphasis on vocabulary learning is obvious and its process-focused or meaning-focused features are also illustrated in analysis of the requirements of speaking skills. As well, argued by Lewis (1993, 1997), Schmitt (1994) and Sinclair (2000) as the best way to acquire vocabulary either for receptive or productive purposes, an approach that combines frequent and contextualized exposure with consciousness raising is potentially reflected in the requirements of the new classroom-and Internet-based teaching model. Thereby, this so called lexis-based approach to CE teaching and learning is mainly constructed on Lewis' (1993) view of the nature of language and the approaches to lexis teaching and learning argued by many researchers like Willis (2003), Thornbury (2002), van Lier (2004), Nunan (2004), Long (2006), and the others as mentioned in Chapter 3. Indeed, the students' mastery of required lexical knowledge and competence is the potential goal of the CECR 2007 syllabus.

Underlying the implementation of this approach, some possible changes would be brought into the CE classroom. First, the teachers would be required to modify their transmission-oriented stance: for example, knowledge and information are handed down from the teacher to the students. Previously (and perhaps now), almost every new lexical item was initiated and addressed by the teacher in the CE class and what the students needed to do was only to respond to the teacher's call for vocabulary meaning and sometimes translate or restructure a sentence under the teacher's directions. This situation would be changed, that is, the students would play more actively in their learning and the teacher would be a learning facilitator or a classroom manager to encourage the students to explore the target language individually in a real-world context.

Secondly, the overwhelming use of explicit definition, being a typical approach featured with the sequential order from definition through example to drilling, would be abandoned in lexis teaching and learning. Instead, the approaches like consciousness-raising, scaffolding

and so on would be more employed in order to help the students to notice the patterns or regularities of language and facilitate the development of a feel for what is the best interpretation of a word or the most acceptable production of one (Thornbury, 2002).

Above all, there might be more potential changes into the classroom underlying this lexis-based approach to CE teaching and learning. All of them could be incorporated into the lexis-focused trend of the CE curriculum development so as to innovate the current CE classroom practice.

7.2.2   Approaches to learner autonomy

According to analysis of the document of CECR 2007, the so-called development of learner-autonomy is basically dependent on the implementation of a well-designed new pedagogic model with the combination of classroom-and Internet-based CE teaching and learning. Its central spirit is that traditional classroom-based CE teaching and learning is transformed into a training program, the main duty of which is to train the students to strategize and manage their own learning with assistance of an on-line course. In contrast to the traditional role of classroom dominator, the CE teacher is required to play as a trainer, a facilitator, a monitor, an advisor, or an assessor, and the students start to be the decision-makers in their own learning process, which means they possess the freedom to select any content that they are interested in to learn and take any methods or strategies that are adaptable to themselves. In the process of this self-directed learning, three types of assessments will be provided. They are separately the teacher's assessment, peer-assessment and self-assessment, among which the teacher assess the students regularly through the on-line system to feedback and advise the students' real-time learning and the students are able to do self-and peer assessments at any time to check out the quality of their current learning and make further strategies. In principle, the students have access to this Internet-based learning anytime and anywhere if the Internet is connected, so this new CE pedagogic model is assumed to be more self-directed and convenient. However, from the author's view, learner autonomy should not be merely constrained into this type of learning and specifically this new pedagogic model is a little bit similar to the traditional distance educational program.

As discussed in literature review of this research in Chapter 3, the conception of learner autonomy should be firmly concerned with the role of individual learners in directing their own learning process both inside and outside the classroom (Alford & Pachler, 2007; Benson, 2000; Breen, 2001). Nunan (2004) provided some further suggestions on how to develop learner autonomy inside the classroom like clear instructional goals, self-directed learning goals, language use in real-world context, self-awareness of processes and strategies,

preferred learning styles, choice-making, learning-task creation, and so on. Tudor (1992) considered the nature of the autonomous-learning based classroom to be awareness-raising, which comprises self-awareness as a language learner, awareness of learning goals, awareness of learning options and language awareness. According to Tudor (1992), language awareness, as an essential component of classroom-based autonomous learning, is likely to be the final goal of L2 learning. As argued by Lewis (1993) and Willis (1990), awareness makes acquisition.

Therefore, the Internet-based autonomous learning implied in the new CE pedagogic model is merely an alternative option to develop self-directedness or learner autonomy and in fact, in the author's opinion, its effects are still uncertain. Nevertheless, it is definitely a remarkable advantage of CECR 2007 to put development of learner autonomy into the focus of CE teaching and learning. This assumes that if helpful with fostering learner autonomy and language awareness, any approaches would be the potentials to innovate the CE classroom implementation.

7.3   Possible challenges to implement the potential approaches in NHCE materials

According to analysis of the NHCE materials in Chapter 6, nearly all the tasks are focused on development of lexical knowledge and competence. This could not certify that this textbook takes a view of the nature of language in correspondence with Lewis' arguments (1993), but indeed the design of some tasks in this textbook reflects some principles of Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993). For example, in the tasks, Text Structure Analysis and Structured Writing, consciousness of pragmatic and discourse meanings of lexical chunks and collocations is evidently raised. Here comes the first challenge mainly from the students as well as the teachers. From the traditional view of language property, vocabulary is a separated unit from grammar. Vocabulary is perceived as a unit of meanings represented by content words but grammar as a unit of rules represented by grammatical words. This traditional perception of language would inevitably arouse a phenomenon that vocabulary learning is merely constrained into mastery of individual content words and list-based rote memory is the most convenient approach to learning. Based on the particular learning culture in China as ever discussed in Chapter 2, this phenomenon is popular among the students and at worse their focus is only concentrated on enlargement of vocabulary size but not on lexical internalization. This leads to a result that some CE students, who have a large number of words in memory, only know their dictionary meanings or equivalent Chinese translations but don't know how to put them into use. Therefore, the first challenge in front of the

implementation of this lexis-based approach underlying task design in this textbook is how to modify the students' and even the teachers' perceptions of the nature of lexis learning.

The second challenge might be the task-based approach. As argued by Hird (1995) that ELT in China is not very communicative, Chinese CE students would like silent text-based learning rather than participate in interactive and communicative tasks. It seems broadly acknowledged that enrichment of vocabulary and grammar through a large quantity of reading would cater for language acquisition and this kind of belief is popular even among the teachers. Moreover, the large class size is another unfavorable element for implementation of the task-based approach. Furthermore, the classroom instructional time is not sufficient so that most CE teachers will choose the conventional incommunicative way to deal with the tasks. Last but not least, in comparison with the task-based approach, the teacher is more familiar with the traditional teacher-centered and lecture-based approach and used to orienting the classroom content to textual analysis and form-focused instruction.

The third challenge is the implementation of learner-centered approach. Similarly, the challenges to the implementation of task-based approach are confronted with the application of learner-centeredness in the CE classroom, such as learning culture, class size, instructional time, and the teacher's preparation. Referring to van Lier's (2004) summary of six central features of scaffolding: Continuity, Contextual support, Inter-subjectivity, Contingency, Handover/Takeover and Flow, learner-centeredness underpinned with scaffolding approach might be a little more realistic than pure self-directedness in the CE classroom. First of all, the tasks provided in the NHCE materials are repeated with variation and connected with one another. Secondly, exploration of pragmatics and semantics of the target language would be possible if the teacher is enthusiastic of creating a safe and supportive atmosphere in the CE classroom. Thirdly, it is very likely for pair-work and group-work to come true with the teacher's encouragement in the CE classroom because at least they are not much affected by class size. Fourthly, according to actions of the students, task procedures could be adjusted if the teacher played a role of learning monitor. Fifthly, when the student is willing to play an increasing role in the task along with promotion of his or her skills, the teacher's job will become easier. Sixthly, if things go on well, learner-centeredness will come to its flow stage and if so, the teacher could just play as a helper. However, all these six steps are merely possibilities and there are still many thing in uncertainty based on the aforementioned challenges in the CE classroom. In one word, the CE classroom is a challenge to learner-centeredness and conversely learner-centeredness is also a challenge to the CE classroom.

Finally, another feature of this textbook is Internet-based. The principal challenge to implementation of this approach might come from provision of the computer and Internet

facilities, which is not the concern of this research. As for potentials of the Internet-based approach to innovating CE teaching and learning, there is much discussion and analysis made in Chapter 4, 5, and 6. Although CECR 2007 and NHCE materials put much emphasis on this approach, in the author's opinion, its effects are still unforeseeable.

7.4 Implications for teachers

Based on all the potential approaches and challenges to CE teaching and learning, the teachers, as the decision-makers and final implementers (Richards and Rodgers, 1985), do not only have to modify their stereotypical notions of language, learner and learning, but also find a feasible way to overcome the challenges in order to put into application the new CE pedagogic model in the classroom. As the final goal of this research, a couple of implications are provided for the CE teachers in accordance with Rod Ellis' basic principles of learning instruction (1994). Some of them might be helpful for the CE teachers to innovate their classroom practice.

At first, in the CE classroom, the learners should be ensured to develop both a rich repertoire of lexical chunks or collocations and a rule-based competence. Traditionally, language instruction has been oriented at developing the explicit knowledge of specific grammatical rules through the systematic teaching of pre-selected structures. This is known as the focus-on-forms approach, which is likely to result in students' learning rote-memorized patterns as in internalizing abstract rules. If the lexical chunks play a large role in language acquisition and delay the teaching of grammar until later or just immerse it into the process of lexis teaching and learning, as proposed by Ellis (2002), a notional-functional approach may lend itself perfectly to the teaching of prefabricated lexical patterns and routines and provide an ideal foundation for direct intervention of target language.

At second, the CE instruction should focus predominantly on meaning. The term 'focus on meaning' can be roughly distinguished into two different senses, one of which refers to the idea of semantic meaning including lexical meaning and grammatical meaning, and the other of which relates to pragmatic meaning, in particular the highly contextualized meaning arising in acts of communication. This type of meaning is arguably crucial to language learning. In the eyes of many theorists (e.g. Prabhu, 1987; Long, 1996), only when learners engaged in decoding and encoding messages in the context of actual acts of communication are the conditions created for acquisition to take place. Engaging learners in activities where they are focused on creating pragmatic meaning is intrinsically motivating.

At third, the CE instruction should focus on form. Schmidt (1994) has argued that there is no learning without conscious attention to form. The term 'focus on form' is capable of more

than one interpretation but Schmidt (2001) and Long (1996) are insistent that focus-on-form refers to the form-function mapping that is the correlation between a particular lexical form and meaning(s) realized in communication. Schmidt (2001) is careful to argue that attention to form refers to the noticing of specific linguistic items or lexical items as proposed by Lewis (1993), as they occur in the input to which learners are exposed, not to an awareness of grammatical rules.

At fourth, the CE implicit knowledge should be developed while explicit knowledge not being neglected. Implicit knowledge is procedural and held unconsciously. In the views of most researchers, competence in an L2 is primarily a matter of implicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge 'is the declarative and often anomalous knowledge of phonological, lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and socio-critical features of an L2 together with the meta-language for labeling this knowledge' (Ellis, 2004). According to skill-building theory (Dekeyser, 2005), implicit knowledge arises out of explicit knowledge. In contrast, emergentist theories (Krashen, 1981; Ellis, 1999) see implicit knowledge as developing naturally out of meaning-focused communication that is perhaps aided by focus on form. Irrespective of these different positions, it is the consensus that leaners need to participate in communicative activities to develop implicit knowledge, which should be the final goal of any kind of instruction.

At fifth, the CE learners should be assisted with the exposure to extensive L2 input. In general, the more exposure to input learners receive, the more and faster they will learn. Krashen (1981, 1994) has adopted a very strong position on the importance of input. He pointed that comprehensible input together with motivation was all that was required for successful acquisition. Such extreme claim of input did not earn agreement with many researchers, who argued that learner output was also important, but they had never denied the importance of input for developing the highly connected implicit knowledge that was needed to become an effective communicator in the L2.

At sixth, opportunities should be created in order to help the CE learners to output the target language. Skehan (1998) summarized the output contributions: learner production serves to generate better input; forces syntactic processing; allows learners to test out the hypothesis about the target language grammar; helps to automatize the existing knowledge; provides opportunities to develop discourse skills; stimulates learners to develop a 'personal voice' on the topics that they are interested in. The researches (e.g. Allen, Swain, Harley & Cummins, 1990) have shown that extended talk of a clause or more in a classroom context is more likely to occur when students initiate interactions in the classroom and when they have to find their own words.

Finally, classroom interaction should be facilitated. According to the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), interaction fosters acquisition when a communication problem arises and learners are engaged in negotiating for meaning. The interactional modifications help to make

input comprehensible, provide corrective feedback and push learners to modify their own output in uptake. In general terms, opportunities for negotiating meaning and plenty of scaffolding are needed to create an acquisition-rich classroom. Johnson (1995) identifies four requirements of this: contexts of language use; expression of personal meanings; language related activities; and full performance in target language. This also sets up the potential principles of interactive classroom activities that should be organized by the teacher.

These above implications have not only pictured what the teacher is potentially able to do, but also figured out the main principles underpinning the interactive instruction in the language classroom. If the CE teacher fulfilled all these implications, the students would be much more self-directed so that the mode of following the puzzling instruction obediently could be switched off and their own learner autonomy would be developed and managed. The teacher's intention would be interpreted well and the learners' active involvement in the classroom tasks and activities would be the main substance and form of the teacher's instruction (Ellis, 1994).

7.5   Future directions

Just as discussed in Chapter 1, limitations of this research are obvious because all that have been achieved only stays at the theoretical and documentary level. If this research were continued, the effects of implementing this new national CE syllabus on the empirical classroom practice would be an essential point to investigate and the methods for qualitative research such as observation and interview would be taken into application in order to find out the potential obstacles on the part of teachers and learners.

Since the release of CECR 2007, a couple of years has passed, but according to the author's observation and experience in Harbin University of Commerce, not many changes occurs to the CE classroom and the innovation still goes slow. Although the reasons for this might be complex, the concerns of teachers and learners should never be neglected. Thus, further investigation on what they think and how they do in the classroom comes in essence, and as well, this arouse our thinking of a series of questions:

1.   To what extent are the CE teachers familiar with this new national syllabus?

2.   How does the CE teacher take use of the new textbook?

3.   What is the nature of language and learning in the CE teacher's mindset?

4.   What are the needs of the CE learners?

5. How do the CE learners think the CE learning should be carried on?

6. What do they know about the development of learner autonomy?

There would be more questions to ask and more puzzles to clarify if this research were going on. In order to paint out the whole picture of the lexis-based CE pedagogy in China, observation and interview should be the alternative methods to be employed.

Observation, as a very important method for research investigation, could offer an investigator the opportunity to gather the live data from naturally occurring social situations (Robson, 2002). In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in a situation rather than relying on second hand accounts. As for the further directions of this research, through continuous classroom observations in a period, the live data of how this new syllabus is implemented, how lexis teaching and learning is conducted and how learner autonomy is developed in the CE classroom would be gathered and some substantial problems would be discovered after analysis.

Moreover, regarding the interview, as Kvale (1996) remarks, as an interview, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data. The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, nonverbal, spoken and heard (Kvale, 1996). Via the interview with CE teachers and learners, data of the nature of language and learning in their mind and the distinction between what they think the CE teaching and learning should be like and what is required in the syllabus and provided in the textbook could be collected. More importantly, since some CE teachers lack the knowledge of L2 teaching and learning, through the interview, it will be easy to find out the gap between what they knew and what they need to know.

All in all, less support of empirical data forms the limitation of this research but just because of this, some further investigations become possible and valuable. The interest in lexis-based CE pedagogy has been raised in China nowadays and it is hopeful to see more findings in this research field in the near future.

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Appendices

Appendix I

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College English Curriculum Requirements (2007)

(English Version)

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With a view to keeping up with the new developments of higher education in China, deepening teaching reform, improving teaching quality, and meeting the needs of the country and society for qualified personnel in the new era, College English Curriculum Requirements (Requirements hereafter) has been drawn up to provide colleges and universities with the guidelines for English instruction to non-English major students.

Because institutions of higher learning differ from each other in terms of teaching resources, students' level of English upon entering college, and the social demands they face, colleges and universities should formulate, in accordance with the Requirements and in the light of their specific circumstances, a scientific, systematic and individualized College English syllabus to guide their own College English teaching.

I. Features and Objectives

College English, an integral part of higher learning, is a required basic course for undergraduate students. Under the guidance of theories of foreign language teaching, College English has as its main components knowledge and practical skills of the English language, learning strategies and intercultural communication. It is a systematic whole, incorporating different teaching models and approaches. The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges.

II. Teaching Requirements

As China is a large country with conditions that vary from region to region and from college to college, the teaching of College English should follow the principle of providing different guidance for different groups of students and instructing them in accordance with their aptitude so as to meet the specific needs of individualized teaching. The requirements for undergraduate College English teaching are set at three levels, i.e., basic requirements,

intermediate requirements, and higher requirements. Non-English majors are required to attain to one of the three levels of requirements after studying and practicing English at school. The basic requirements are the minimum level that all non-English majors have to reach before graduation. Intermediate and advanced requirements are recommended for those colleges and universities, which have more favorable conditions; they should select their levels according to the school's status, types and education goals. Institutions of higher learning should set their own objectives in the light of their specific circumstances, strive to create favorable conditions, and enable those students who have a relatively higher English proficiency and stronger capacity for learning to meet the intermediate or advanced requirements. The three levels of requirements are set as follows:

Basic requirements:

1. Listening: Students should be able to follow classroom instructions, everyday conversations, and lectures on general topics conducted in English. They should be able to understand English radio and TV programs spoken at a speed of about 130 to 150 words per minute (wpm), grasping the main ideas and key points. They are expected to be able to employ basic listening strategies to facilitate comprehension. 2. Speaking: Students should be able to communicate in English in the course of learning, to conduct discussions on a given theme, and to talk about everyday topics in English. They should be able to give, after some preparation, short talks on familiar topics with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation. They are expected to be able to use basic conversational strategies in dialogue.

3. Reading: Students should generally be able to read English texts on general topics at a speed of 70 wpm. With longer yet less difficult texts, the reading speed should be 100 wpm. Students should be able to do skimming and scanning. With the help of dictionaries, they should be able to read textbooks in their areas of specialty, and newspaper and magazine articles on familiar topics, grasping the main ideas and understanding major facts and relevant details. They should be able to understand texts of practical styles commonly used in work and daily life. They are expected to be able to employ effective reading strategies while reading.

4. Writing: Students should be able to complete writing tasks for general purposes, e.g., describing personal experiences, impressions, feelings, or some events, and to undertake practical writing. They should be able to write within 30 minutes a short composition of no less than 120 words on a general topic, or an outline. The composition should be basically

complete in content, clear in main idea, appropriate in diction and coherent in discourse. Students are expected to be able to have a command of basic writing strategies.

5. Translation: With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate essays on familiar topics from English into Chinese and vice versa. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 300 English words per hour whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 250 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should be basically accurate, free from serious mistakes in comprehension or expression.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 4,795 words and 700 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses), among which 2,000 are active words. Students should not only be able to comprehend the active words but be proficient in using them when expressing themselves in speaking or writing.

Intermediate requirements:

1. Listening: Students should generally be able to follow talks and lectures in English, to understand longer English radio and TV programs on familiar topics spoken at a speed of around 150 to 180 wpm, grasping the main ideas, key points and relevant details. They should be able to understand, by and large, courses in their areas of specialty taught in English.

2. Speaking: Students should be able to hold conversations in fairly fluent English. They should, by and large, be able to express their personal opinions, feelings and views, to state facts and reasons, and to describe events with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation.

3. Reading: Students should generally be able to read essays on general topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries at a speed of 70 to 90 wpm. With longer texts for fast reading, the reading speed should be 120 wpm. Students should be able to skim or scan reading materials. When reading summary literature in their areas of specialty, students should be able to get a correct understanding of the main ideas, major facts and relevant details.

4. Writing: Students should be able to express, by and large, personal views on general topics, compose English abstracts for theses in their own specialization, and write short English papers on topics in their field. They should be able to describe charts and graphs, and to complete within 30 minutes a short composition of no less than 160 words. The composition

should be complete in content, clear in idea, well organized in presentation and coherent in discourse.

5. Translation: With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate on a selective basis English literature in their field, and to translate texts on familiar topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 350 English words per hour, whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 300 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should read smoothly, convey the original meaning and be, in the main, free from mistakes in understanding or expression. Students are expected to be able to use appropriate translation techniques.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 6,395 words and 1,200 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses and the Basic Requirements), among which 2,200 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements).

Advanced Requirements:

1. Listening: Students should, by and large, be able to understand radio and TV programs produced in English-speaking countries and grasp the gist and key points. They should be able to follow talks by people from English-speaking countries given at normal speed, and to understand courses in their areas of specialty and lectures in English.

2. Speaking: Students should be able to conduct dialogues or discussions with a certain degree of fluency and accuracy on general or specialized topics, and to make concise summaries of extended texts or speeches in fairly difficult language. They should be able to deliver papers at academic conferences and participate in discussions.

3. Reading: Students should be able to read rather difficult texts, and understand their main ideas and details. They should be able to read English articles in newspapers and magazines published abroad, and to read English literature related to their areas of specialty without much difficulty.

4. Writing: Students should be able to write brief reports and papers in their areas of specialty, to express their opinions freely, and to write within 30 minutes expository or argumentative essays of no less than 200 words on a given topic. The text should be characterized by clear expression of ideas, rich content, neat structure, and good logic.

5. Translation: With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate into Chinese fairly difficult English texts in literature related to their areas of specialty and in newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries; they should also be able to translate Chinese introductory texts on the conditions of China or Chinese culture into English. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 400 English words per hour whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 350 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should convey the idea with accuracy and smoothness and be basically free from misinterpretation, omission and mistakes in expression.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 7,675 words and 1,870 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses, the Basic Requirements and Intermediate Requirements), among which 2,360 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements and Intermediate Requirements).

The above-mentioned three requirements serve as reference standards for colleges and universities in preparing their own College English teaching documents. They could, in the light of their respective circumstances, make due adjustments to the specific requirements for listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation at the three levels. In doing so they should place more emphasis on the cultivation and training of listening and speaking abilities.

III. Course Design

Taking into account the school's circumstances, colleges and universities should follow the guidelines of the Requirements and the goals of their College English teaching in designing their College English course systems. A course system, which is a combination of required and elective courses in comprehensive English, language skills, English for practical uses, language and culture, and English of specialty, should ensure that students at different levels receive adequate training and make improvement in their ability to use English. In designing College English courses, requirements for cultivating competence in listening and speaking should be fully considered, and corresponding teaching hours and credits should be adequately allocated. Moreover, the extensive use of advanced information technology should be encouraged, computer- and Web-based courses should be developed, and students should be provided with favorable environment and facilities for language learning. College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values. When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full

consideration the development of students' cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different cultures in the world. All the courses, whether computer-based or classroom-based, should be fully individual-oriented, taking into account students with different starting points, so that students who start from lower levels will be well taken care of while students whose English is better will find room for further development. College English course design should help students to have a solid foundation in the English language while developing their ability to use English, especially their ability to listen and speak in English. It should ensure that students make steady progress in English proficiency throughout their undergraduate studies, and it should encourage students' individualized learning so as to meet the needs of their development in different specialties.

IV. Teaching Model

In view of the marked increase in student enrolments and the relatively limited resources, colleges and universities should remold the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching by introducing computer- and classroom-based teaching models. The new model should be built on modern information technology, particularly network technology, so that English language teaching and learning will be, to a certain extent, free from the constraints of time or place and geared towards students' individualized and autonomous learning. The new model should combine the principles of practicality, knowledge and interest, facilitate mobilizing the initiative of both teachers and students, and attach particular importance to the central position of students and the leading role of teachers in the teaching and learning process. This model should incorporate into it the strengths of the current model and give play to the advantages of traditional classroom teaching while fully employing modern information technology. Colleges and universities should explore and establish a Web-based listening and speaking teaching model that suits their own needs in line with their own conditions and students' English proficiency, and deliver listening and speaking courses via the internet or campus network. The teaching of reading, writing and translation can be conducted either in the classroom or online. With regard to computer- and Web-based courses, face-to-face coaching should be provided in order to guarantee the effects of learning. The network-based teaching system developed in an attempt to implement the new teaching model should cover the complete process of teaching, learning, feedback and management, including such modules as students' learning and self-assessment, teachers' lectures, and online coaching, as well as the monitoring and management of learning and coaching. It should be able to track down, record and check the progress of learning in addition to teaching and coaching, and attain to a high level of interactivity, multimedia-use and operability. Colleges and universities should adopt good teaching software and encourage teachers to make

effective use of web multimedia and other teaching resources. One of the objectives of the reform of the teaching model is to promote the development of individualized study methods and the autonomous learning ability on the part of students. The new model should enable students to select materials and methods suited to their individual needs, obtain guidance in learning strategies, and gradually improve their autonomous learning ability. Changes in the teaching model by no means call for changes in teaching methods and approaches only, but, more important, consist of changes in teaching philosophy and practice, and in a shift from a teacher-centered pattern, in which knowledge of the language and skills are imparted by the teacher in class only, to a student-centered pattern, in which the ability to use the language and the ability to learn independently are cultivated in addition to language knowledge and skills, and also to lifelong education, geared towards cultivating students' lifelong learning ability. For the implementation of the new model, refer to Appendix I: Computer- and Classroom-Based College English Teaching Model.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation is a key component in College English teaching. A comprehensive, objective, scientific and accurate evaluation system is of vital importance to the achievement of course goals. It not only helps teachers obtain feedback, improve the administration of teaching, and ensure teaching quality but also provides students with an effective means to adjust their learning strategies and methods, improve their learning efficiency and achieve the desired learning effects. The evaluation of students' learning consists of formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment refers to procedural and developmental assessment conducted in the teaching process, i.e., tracking the teaching process, providing feedback and promoting an all-round development of the students, in accordance with the teaching objectives and by means of various evaluative methods. It facilitates the effective monitoring of students' autonomous learning, and is particularly important in implementing the computer- and classroom-based teaching model. It includes students' self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment conducted by teachers and school administrators. Formative assessment takes such forms as keeping a record of students' in and outside of classroom activities and online self-learning data, keeping files on students' study results, and conducting interviews and holding meetings. This allows students' learning processes to be subjected to observation, evaluation and supervision, thus contributing to the enhancement of their learning efficiency. (See the recommended Self-Assessment/Peer Assessment Forms for Students' English Competence in Appendix II) Summative assessment is conducted at the end of a teaching phase. It mainly consists of final tests and proficiency tests, designed to evaluate student's all-round ability to use English. These tests aim to assess not only students'

competence in reading, writing and translation, but also their competence in listening and speaking. To make a summative assessment of teaching, colleges and universities may administer tests of their own, run tests at the intercollegiate or regional level, or let students take the national test after meeting the different standards set by the Requirements. Whatever form the tests may take, the focus should be on the assessment of students' ability to use English in communication, particularly their ability to listen and speak in English. Evaluation also includes that of the teachers, i.e., the assessment of their teaching processes and effects. This should not be merely based on students' test scores, but take into account teachers' attitudes, approaches, and methods; it should also consider the content and organization of their courses, and the effects of their teaching. Government education administrative offices at different levels and colleges and universities should regard the evaluation of College English teaching as an important part of the evaluation of the overall undergraduate education of the school.

VI. Teaching Administration

Teaching administration should cover the whole process of College English teaching. To ensure that the set teaching objectives can be achieved, efforts should be made to strengthen the guidance for and supervision of the teaching process. For this purpose, the following measures should be taken:

1. A system for teaching and teaching administration documentation should be established. Documents of teaching include College English Curriculum of the colleges and universities concerned, as well as the documents stipulating the teaching objectives, course description, teaching arrangement, content of teaching, teaching progress, and methods of assessment for all the courses within the program. Documents of teaching administration include documents registering students' status and their academic credits, regulations of assessment, students' academic scores and records, analyses of exam papers, guidelines for teaching and records of teaching and research activities.

2. The College English program should adapt itself to the overall credit system of the colleges and universities concerned and should account for 10% (around 16) of the total undergraduate credits. The credits students acquire via computer-based courses should be equally acknowledged once students pass the exams. It is suggested that these credits should account for no less than 30% of the total credits in College English learning.

3. Faculty employment and management should be improved in order to guarantee a reasonable teacher-student ratio. In addition to classroom teaching, the hours spent on face-to-

face coaching, instructions on network usage and on extracurricular activities should be counted in the teachers' teaching load.

4. A system of faculty development should be established. The quality of teachers is the key to the improvement of the teaching quality, and to the development of the College English program. Colleges and universities should build a faculty team with a good structure of age, educational backgrounds and professional titles, lay emphasis on the training and development of College English teachers, encourage them to conduct teaching and research with a focus on the improvement of teaching quality, create conditions for them to carry out relevant activities in various forms, and promote effective cooperation among them, so that they can better adapt to the new teaching model. Meanwhile, opportunities should be created so that the teachers can enjoy sabbaticals and engage in advanced studies, thus ensuring sustainable improvement in their academic performance and methods of teaching.

Appendix II

Computer- and Classroom-Based CE Teaching Model

The new College English teaching model based on the computer and the classroom is designed to help Chinese students achieve the objectives set by the Requirements. The model places a premium on individualized teaching and independent learning and makes full use of the special function of computers in assisting learners with repeated language practice, especially with training in listening and speaking abilities. While taking advantage of the teachers' lectures and coaching, students can be assisted by computers in choosing the appropriate content and methods of learning according to their specific needs, proficiency and schedules under the guidance of teachers, so that their all-round ability to use English can be improved and the best effects of learning achieved. To implement the computer-based English learning, the teacher's role of face-to-face coaching should be stressed. It could take the form of group work, focusing on checking students' independent learning, and providing due guidance and assistance for students. In principle, at least one hour of coaching should be offered after every 16 to 20 hours of student learning.

1. Computer- and Classroom-Based College English Teaching Model
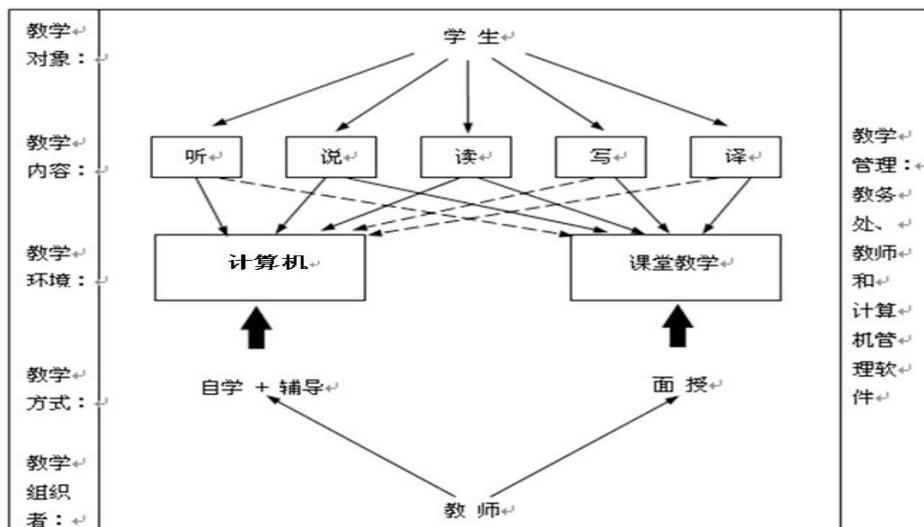
a. Recipients of teaching: Students

b. Content of teaching: Listening; Speaking; Reading; Writing; and Translating.

c. Environment of teaching: Computer-based; Classroom-based.

d. (PC or Web) Models of teaching: Self-learning + Tutoring; Regular Teaching.

e. Organizers of classroom process: Teachers.

f. Teaching administration: Administrative Office of Teaching Affairs and Teachers.

g. Teaching Management Software

Instructions: Teaching activities such as practice in English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation can be conducted via either the computer or classroom teaching. The solid arrow indicates the main form of a certain environment of teaching, while the dotted arrow the supplementary form of a certain environment of teaching. Specifically, listening ability is trained mainly in a computer- and Web-based environment, supplemented by classroom teaching; writing and translation are trained mainly in the classroom, supplemented by a computer- and Web-based environment. Speaking and reading, on the other hand, are trained by both means. In the process of teaching, teachers serve as organizers of teaching activities, and the administrative office of teaching affairs, teachers, and teaching management software implements teaching administration.

2. Process of Computer-Based English Learning
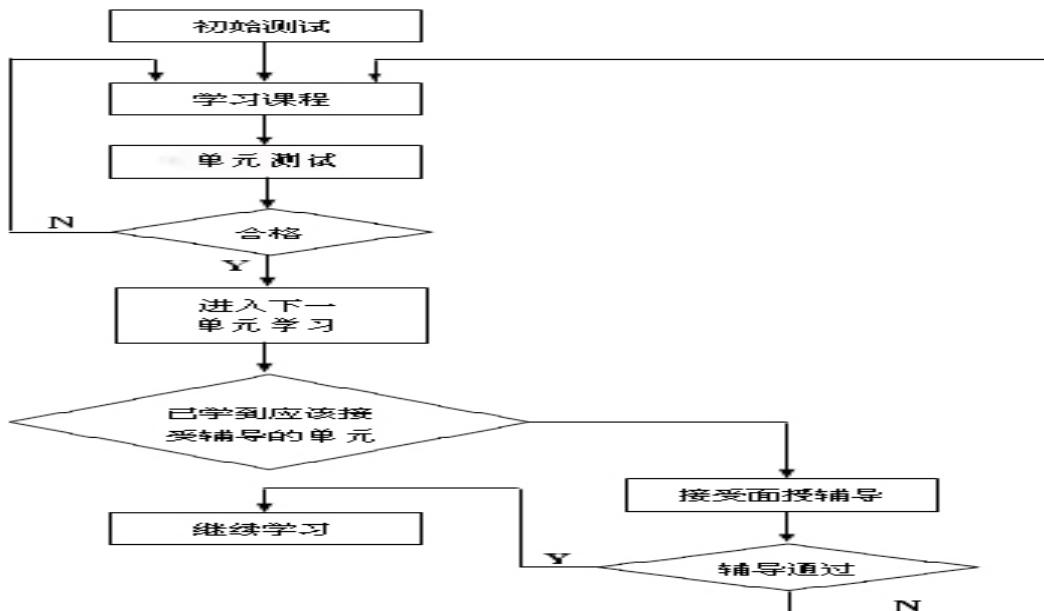
Start to learn the Course － Take the Unit Test － N/Y － Enter Next Unit (Y) –－Receive Tutoring －Y/N －Go on Learning (Y)

Instructions: Freshmen take a computer-based placement test upon entering college to measure their respective starting levels, such as Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3. After the

teachers determine the grade and establish an account for all students based on their test results via the Management System, students can start to study courses according to teachers' arrangement. After learning continues for a certain period of time (set by the universities and colleges), students can take the Web-based unit test designed by the teachers. Then students automatically enter the next unit if they pass the test. If they fail, students then return to the current unit and repeat the whole learning process. When they are ready (after studying a few units), students should receive tutoring. After individualized tutoring, teachers can check the students' online learning by means of either oral or written tests, and then decide whether the students can pass. If they pass, students can go on to the next stage; if they fail, the students should be required by teachers to go back to a certain unit and re-study it until they pass.

Appendix III

Self-Assessment/Peer-Assessment Forms

Instructions:

1. The Self-Assessment/Peer Assessment Form for Students' English Competence specifies and lists various linguistic skills covered in the Basic Requirements, Intermediate Requirements and Advanced Requirements. It can help teachers better understand teaching requirements at different levels, thus adding direct relevance to teaching. In addition, teachers can either supplement or modify related skills according to the school's College English syllabus.

2. Teachers can introduce to students the skills listed in the Self-Assessment/Peer Assessment Form at the beginning of their teaching, in order to acquaint them with the teaching requirements.

3. Teachers should require students to do self-assessment and peer assessment at regular intervals, and in doing so, help them to know about their own mastery of linguistic skills and regulate their learning behaviors on a timely basis.

4. Students are expected to assess their own or their classmates' English competence in the "Assessment" column on the right of the form, giving a tick (√) to what they are able to achieve. Then based on the results of self-assessment or peer assessment, and with reference to the directions given below, students can arrange for learning at the next stage.

A	B	C	D
Able to master all linguistic skills: fully meet the teaching requirements at this level	Able to master about 3/4 of all linguistic skills: adequately meet the teaching requirements at this level, likely to achieve learning objectives with some efforts	Able to master about 2/3 of all linguistic skills: basically meet the teaching requirements at this level, yet more effort required	Not able to master 1/2 of all linguistic skills; not meet the teaching requirements at this level, in need of guidance, and of methods and plans for learning adjustments

The following table can be used as reference for records of self-assessment and peer assessment:

Date (yy/mm/dd)	Means of assessment (√)		Results of assessment (A, B, C, D)				
	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment	L	S	R	W	T

(Note: L: Listening; S: Speaking; R: Reading; W: Writing; T: Translation)

Form I: Basic Requirements	Assessment
Listening:	
Understand lessons given in English.	
Join in discussions and speak in class according to requirements.	
Understand the main points of audio-visual materials, for example, dialogues, short passages or reports, related to what is taught in class and delivered at slow speed (130 – 150 words per minute).	
Understand English broadcasts, for example, news reports, science reports and stories about history, delivered at slow speed.	
Understand directions to places, instructions for doing things, and manuals.	
Understand numbers (both cardinal and ordinal) and time expressions.	
Understand the topic of the discussion, and grasp the main idea and major points.	
Use basic listening skills.	
Speaking:	
Answer questions in class, use familiar simple expressions and sentences to exchange opinions with classmates, and give short prepared speeches on familiar topics.	
Introduce myself classmates and friends, and respond to other people's introductions.	
Give directions, do shopping, leave messages and make requests in simple English.	
Use English numbers to report time, inquire about prices and give telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.	
Hold simple conversations with native English-speakers on everyday topics.	
Have mastered basic conversational strategies, for example, initiating, maintaining and closing a conversation, and asking people to repeat what they have said.	
Reading:	
Understand the main idea and major details of intermediate-level texts on general topics at intermediate speed (70 words per minute).	
Read longer yet less difficult texts at a relatively fast speed (100 words per minute).	
Read textbooks in my area of specialty, and newspaper and magazine articles on familiar topics with the help of dictionaries, grasping the main ideas, and understanding major facts and relevant details.	

Understand everyday forms, for example, registration forms, application forms and questionnaires.	
Understand directions, manuals, advertisements, posters and invitations.	
Understand personal letters on everyday topics and business letters on general subjects.	
Find information on the Internet.	
Read texts in English newspapers and magazines published in China, and understand the main idea and major facts.	
Have mastered basic reading skills, for example, scanning, skimming and using context clues to guess the meaning of new words and idioms.	
Writing:	
Fill in everyday forms, for example registration forms, application forms and questionnaires.	
Write greeting cards, birthday cards, invitations, notes, messages and notices, and make replies.	
Write simple directions, advertisements, and resumes, and make posters.	
Write simple texts describing personal experiences, events, stories, films, and emotions such as happiness, anger and sadness.	
Write and reply to personal letters, business letters, E-mails and faxes.	
Write short texts of no less than 120 words within 30 minutes on a given topic or according to an outline. The texts are basically complete in content, clear in main idea, appropriate in word usage and coherent in meaning.	
Use relevant writing skills in practical and general-purpose writing.	
Translation:	
Translate texts on familiar topics from English into Chinese at a speed of about 300 words per hour with the help of a dictionary. The translation can convey the basic meaning of the original text and is idiomatic, free from serious mistakes in comprehension and expression.	
Translate texts on familiar topics from Chinese into English at a speed of around 250 Chinese characters per hour with the help of a dictionary. The translation can convey the basic meaning of the original text and is idiomatic, free from serious mistakes in comprehension and expression.	
Translate English articles, introductions, abstracts, advertisements and manuals related to my area of specialty into Chinese with the help of a dictionary.	
Use the basic translating techniques.	

Form II: Intermediate Requirements	Assessment
Listening:	
Understand the main points and details of talks or lectures in English.	
Understand the main idea and major details of extended English radio or TV broadcasts, for example, news reports, interviews and lectures on familiar topics delivered at a speed of 150-180 words per minute.	
Understand most of the content of courses in my area of specialty taught by foreign teachers in English.	
Use basic listening skills to help comprehension, for example, skills to understand main points or details.	
Speaking:	
Hold conversations in fairly fluent English with native English-speakers on familiar topics, maintain the conversation or discussion, and agree or disagree with the other party politely.	
Give directions, make explanations and answer difficult questions using relatively complicated language, when looking at maps or using instruction manuals.	
Express personal emotions, for example, surprise, likes and dislikes, depression, and complaints, and give personal opinions on certain events.	
Tell a complete story, for example, how it happened, developed and ended and the time, place, characters and causes involved.	
Describe personal experiences, such as an event that happened in the past or a personally experienced event.	
Express wishes and hopes, for example, about a travel plan or an ideal job.	
Reading:	
Basically understand articles on general topics from popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries, at intermediate speed (70-90 words per minute).	
Read extended texts with an intermediate level of difficulty at a relatively fast speed (120 words per minute).	
Skim reports on current affairs, people and events for the main points.	
Quickly scan texts for information needed.	
Read summary literature in my area of specialty; get a correct understanding of the main ideas, major facts and relevant details.	
Understand technical texts related to my area of specialty with the help of a dictionary and quickly find the needed information in technical manuals in order to solve technical problems.	

Writing:	
Write abstracts or outlines of texts on general topics, expressing my opinions on an issue of public concern and making clear the reasons that I agree or disagree.	
Compose English abstracts of theses in my own specialization.	
Write practical texts on everyday topics, with structure and expression appropriate to the form of practical writing.	
Write well-structured short thesis about my area of specialty with the help of reference materials.	
Write narrative, expository or argumentative texts of no less than 160 words within 30 minutes on a given topic, with complete content, clear idea, well-organized presentation, and correct grammar.	
Translation:	
Translate texts on familiar topics found in newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries with the help of a dictionary. The speed of translating from English into Chinese is about 350 words per hour. The translation is correct and fluent, with few mistakes in understanding or expression.	
Translate texts on general topics from Chinese into English at a speed of 300 Chinese characters per hour with the help of a dictionary. The translation, with few mistakes in understanding or expression, reads smoothly, and conveys the original meaning.	
Translate on a selective basis English literature related to my area of specialty into Chinese. The translation is idiomatic.	
Use appropriate translation techniques.	

Form III: Advanced Requirements	**Assessment**
Listening:	
Understand extended dialogues, passages and reports delivered at normal speed and grasp the main points and major details, even when the structure is complicated and the idea is only implied.	
Understand radio and TV broadcasts produced in English-speaking countries, for example, news reports, interviews, lectures, films and TV series, delivered at normal speed, and grasp the main idea and key points.	
Understand courses in my area of specialty and lectures in English.	
Understand academic lectures and special talks related to my area of specialty, and grasp the facts and abstract ideas in them.	
Speaking:	
Hold conversations or discussions on general or specialized topics with native English-speakers in fairly fluent and correct English, and effectively maintain the conversation or discussion.	
Express myself, for example, my emotions and wishes, in English flexibly and effectively for personal purposes or purposes of communication.	
Make concise summaries of extended texts or speeches in difficult language, and give extended explanations on a certain topic.	
Express my opinions freely at academic conferences or exchanges, with clear focus, complete content and fluent language.	
Use fairly complicated speaking skills, for example, attracting the audience's attention, maintaining their enthusiasm and adjusting my relationship with other speakers.	
Reading:	
Read fairly difficult texts, and understand the main idea and details.	
Understand original versions of English textbooks and articles from newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries with the help of a dictionary.	
Understand English literature related to my area of specialty without much difficulty.	
Writing:	
Express my opinions freely on general topics with clear structure, rich content and good logic.	
Sum up information obtained from different channels and write synopses or summaries in English.	
Write abstracts about my area of specialty, brief specialized reports and papers.	

Write narrative, expository, or argumentative essays of no less than 200 words on a given topic within 30 minutes. The texts have clear expression of ideas, neat structure, rich content, and good logic.	
Translation:	
Translate into Chinese fairly difficult articles in literature related to my area of specialty and on popular science, culture and reviews from newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries at a speed of 400 words per hour with the help of a dictionary. The translation is correct and fluent, basically free from misinterpretation and omission.	
Translate introductory articles on the conditions of China or Chinese culture into English at a speed of about 350 Chinese characters per hour. The translation is fluent and idiomatic, basically free from misinterpretation and omission.	