

The Design of Task-based College English Coursebooks: A study from the perspective of task-based language teaching

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Abstract

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has won increasing popularity in the language-teaching field. It is regarded as an effective approach which can help to facilitate language teaching and learning processes, and is widely accepted. However, the current English coursebooks in China do not adequately meet the particular requirements of the TBLT approach. Therefore, this research aims to concentrate on the design of college English coursebooks from the perspective of TBLT. It develops a task-based coursebook model with reference to Willis' (1996) TBLT framework. The coursebook unit structure in this model is organized according to the task phases which Willis promoted. At the same time, in terms of the selection of coursebook topics and materials, a survey was conducted to study students' interests and preferences. Hopefully, this research will make some contribution to help to push forward the implementation of TBLT in college English education in China.

Key terms: task-based language teaching, coursebook design, Willis' framework, unit structure, topics and materials

1. Introduction

The past two decades have seen an increasing interest in task-based language teaching (TBLT), which has rapidly developed as an important approach in language pedagogy. It has been the subject of numerous studies and has had a profound impact on the innovation of language teaching all around the world (Cheng, 2006).

In China, the study of TBLT has been increasing since the late 1990s. 2004 saw the nationwide reform of college English language teaching. Accompanied with the reform, a variety of coursebooks have been compiled and published since then. However, among the various versions of coursebooks, few could perfectly fit the particular requirements of the TBLT approach.

According to Cunningsworth (2002), "Coursebooks are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs" (p. 7). Indeed, there is no doubt that appropriate coursebooks are of vital importance for the implementation of teaching methodology, especially in the Chinese educational field, where both teachers and students rely a lot on coursebooks. Therefore, the design of a particular task-based coursebook might be quite helpful for the application of TBLT in college English education.

This research aims to concentrate on the design of college English coursebooks from the perspective of TBLT. It attempts to create a coursebook model in accordance with the theoretical basis of TBLT as well as in the context of realistic educational conditions. Willis' framework of TBLT will be the major reference in terms of the coursebook design, and the students' needs and opinions will be taken into account as well.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Overview of TBLT

2.1.1 Definition of Task

There are various ways to define a task, and so far no complete agreement has been achieved among researchers. Long and Crookes regard a task as a real-life activity, while Breen and Nunan consider it as a pedagogical work plan (as cited in Ellis, 2003).

This study adopts Willis' (1996) definition, which refers to tasks as "activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p.23). To put it more specifically, a "task" in this paper refers to the activity which facilitates the language learning process by providing communicative and meaning-oriented assignments. Through the meaning negotiation, students achieve certain outcomes, and finally enhance their language abilities by the

performance of the task.

2.1.2 Willis' Framework of TBLT

The present study mainly adopts Willis' framework of TBLT as the basis of coursebook design. Among the various theories and perspectives, Willis' framework is relatively complete and systematic. With the clearly defined phases and detailed descriptions of task performance, this framework is practical, and therefore is widely accepted by both researchers and teachers. Thus, the present study is going to organize the coursebook model based on Willis' framework, with the hope of pushing forward the implementation of TBLT.

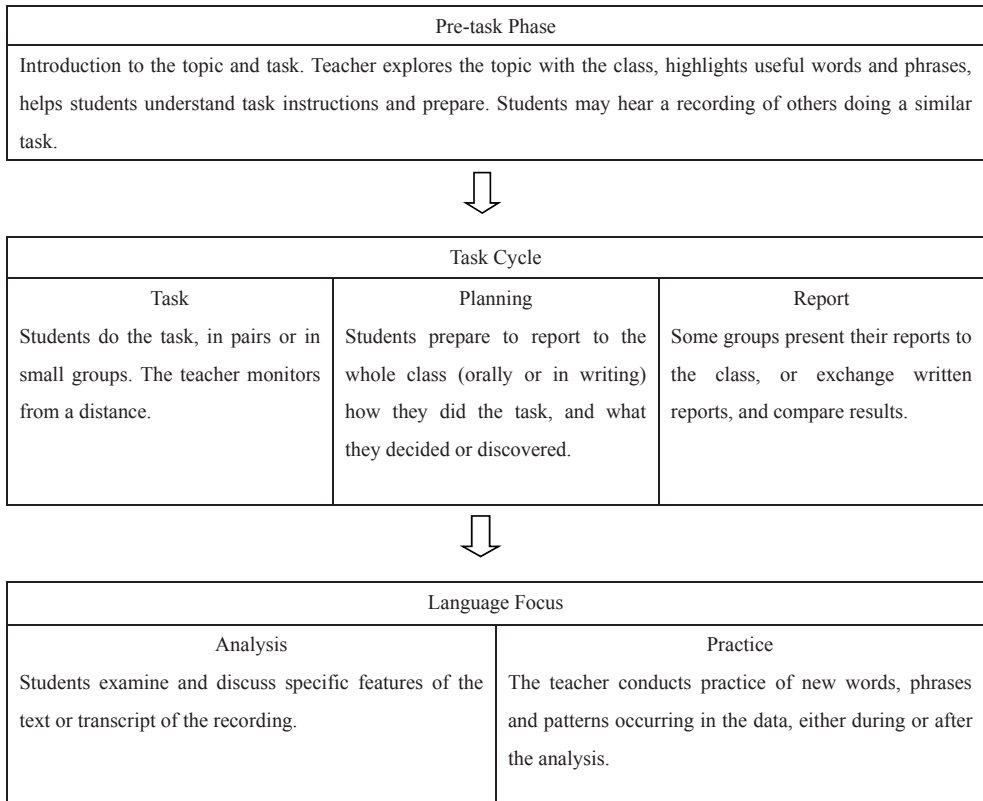


Figure 1 Willis' Framework of TBLT (Willis, 1996, p.38)

- **Pre-task Phase**

In the pre-task phase, the teacher firstly introduces the topic of the task to the students. The topic should be familiar to the students and proper for the context. After the introduction, the teacher should help the students to recall and activate some expressions which are possibly useful for the following task, so as to increase the students' confidence in conducting the task. Then, the teacher should offer some directions as to what the task includes, how to perform it, and what is the expected outcome. Only with a clear understanding of the instruction can the students complete the task effectively.

- **Task Cycle**

In the task stage, the students communicate in the target language and negotiate meaning in order to achieve the goal of the task. During the process, the focus is put on meaning instead of language, and this stage "functions as a chance for students to achieve fluency in communication rather than accuracy of the language" (Zhang, 2008, p.53). When the task is completed, the students are given a period of time to plan and prepare their task report. With the support of group members, a dictionary, as well as

the teacher, the students try to organize and improve their language. As Willis puts it, “it is this process that is likely to drive their language development forward and give them new insights into language use” (Willis, 1996, p.56). Finally, the students give reports to the class and exchange ideas. Such practice offers the students an opportunity to use language naturally in order to convey meaning. In addition, through the exchange, the students may share with each other in terms of the methods of achieving the task as well as the means of language expression.

- **Language Focus**

The language focus phase shifts the focus from meaning to forms. Distinguished from the traditional form-based teaching approach, here the forms are “contextualized through the task rather than decontextualized” (Zhang, 2008, p.56). In this phase, the students examine the language used in the performance of the task, analyzing the forms (vocabulary, grammar, usage and so on) in order to get a deeper understanding of the target language. Relevant practice could be offered during or after the analysis, so as to reinforce the students’ insight of the language.

2.1.3 TBLT in China

In recent years, research focusing on different perspectives of TBLT has been conducted and discussed, combining the foreign theories with the teaching reality in China. Cheng (2006) summed up the previous theories of TBLT and put forward his own considerations. He analyzed and made comments on Willis’ framework according to the English teaching situation in China. Yin and Zhao (2006) carried out a case study on task-based module design. They analyzed a standard task-based unit in a foreign course book, and suggested that task-based course book should include multi-genre and multi-style authentic materials which are familiar to the students, in order to provide them with sufficient comprehensible language input. Zhang (2008) analyzed Willis’ framework of TBLT, pointing out its particular features and the reasons why it is suitable for the Chinese context. He drew the conclusion that certain revisions of the framework may lead to better production of language from students. Chen (2011) provided a picture of how high school teachers in China deal with the TBLT approach. She carried out four case studies, which indicated that teachers’ theoretical knowledge of and beliefs towards TBLT were crucial in the implementation of the task-based approach.

2.2 Importance of Coursebooks

According to Cunningsworth (2002), coursebooks are supposed to reflect the aims, methods and values of the teaching programme. He claimed that coursebooks have multiple roles in ELT and can serve as:

- A resource for presentation material (spoken and written)
- A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
- A reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc
- A source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities
- A syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives which have already been determined)
- A resource for self-directed learning or self-access work
- A support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence (Cunningsworth, 2002, p. 7)

Coursebooks are indispensable for both teachers and students. However, since different coursebooks vary from one to another, it is necessary to select the one which is the most appropriate for the specific teaching objective, approach and situation.

Numerous researches have been done on the evaluation and development of the college English coursebooks in China. Zhang (2010) mentioned that coursebooks should serve as a means to achieve the pedagogical objectives. According to her suggestions, coursebooks should push forward the student-centered class patterns by providing multiple tasks in the book. Yuan (2006) studied the task design in college English coursebooks. In her opinion, the main challenge lay in the selection of tasks, the authenticity of materials, the quantity of vocabulary, the sequence of tasks, and the relationship between meaning and forms.

To sum up, coursebooks are of vital significance in the language teaching process and have a great impact on the implementation of teaching approach. Therefore, a coursebook model tailored to TBLT is in demand for the purpose of pushing forward the reform of college English education in China, as well as improving the present versions of coursebooks.

3. Methodology

This research focuses on the design of a task-based coursebook for college English education. Emphasis is placed on two aspects: firstly, the design of a coursebook model, focusing on the structure and organization of the learning unit; secondly, the selection of topics and materials for the task.

The design of the task-based coursebook model is based on Willis' framework of TBLT. For each learning unit, the structure was arranged according to Willis' framework, following its phrases and integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Further investigation of the framework was conducted by analyzing it from the view of the teaching reality in China, for the purpose of making a proper application of the theory in the designing process. Additionally, since this task-based coursebook model is for college students, who possess a relatively high-level of language competence and cognitive ability, special attention was paid to make sure that the task forms fit the students' particular context.

For the selection of topics and materials, questionnaires were used to collect students' opinions. Swan et al (1992) state that "people generally learn languages best when their experience, knowledge of the world, interests and feelings are involved, and a course must allow students to be themselves as fully as possible". Therefore, it is important to identify the needs of the learners in order to choose the most suitable topics and materials. A total of 100 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the students who took the course "College English IV" at Zhejiang University. The completed questionnaires were 97. The respondents included 64 males and 33 females, whose ages ranged from 18 to 22 years old. The questionnaire consisted of four parts—listening, reading, speaking and writing—which were regarded as the four major language skills. It was mainly concerned about students' views on topic area, material source, and learning objective in developing these skills. By analyzing the data, we can infer what kinds of topics and materials are favored by learners and consequently we can place more emphasis on them when designing coursebooks.

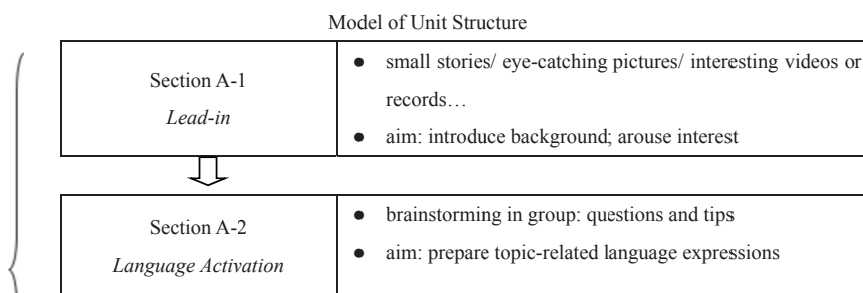
4. Design of Task-based College English Coursebook

4.1 Coursebook Model--Structure of Learning Unit

Willis' framework is adopted here to help to design a model with clear task phases and specific steps. For each learning unit, the whole structure will resemble Willis' framework, composed of three general parts, which are further divided into several individual sections.

In this model, all the major language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are to be included. However, there will be no distinct division of the skills in the task design; instead, we try to mix the various skills into a whole task in each unit, which means that there might be sub-tasks in one task cycle in order to take into account the different aspects of language learning.

The following (Figure 2) is a general model of a unit in a task-based coursebook.



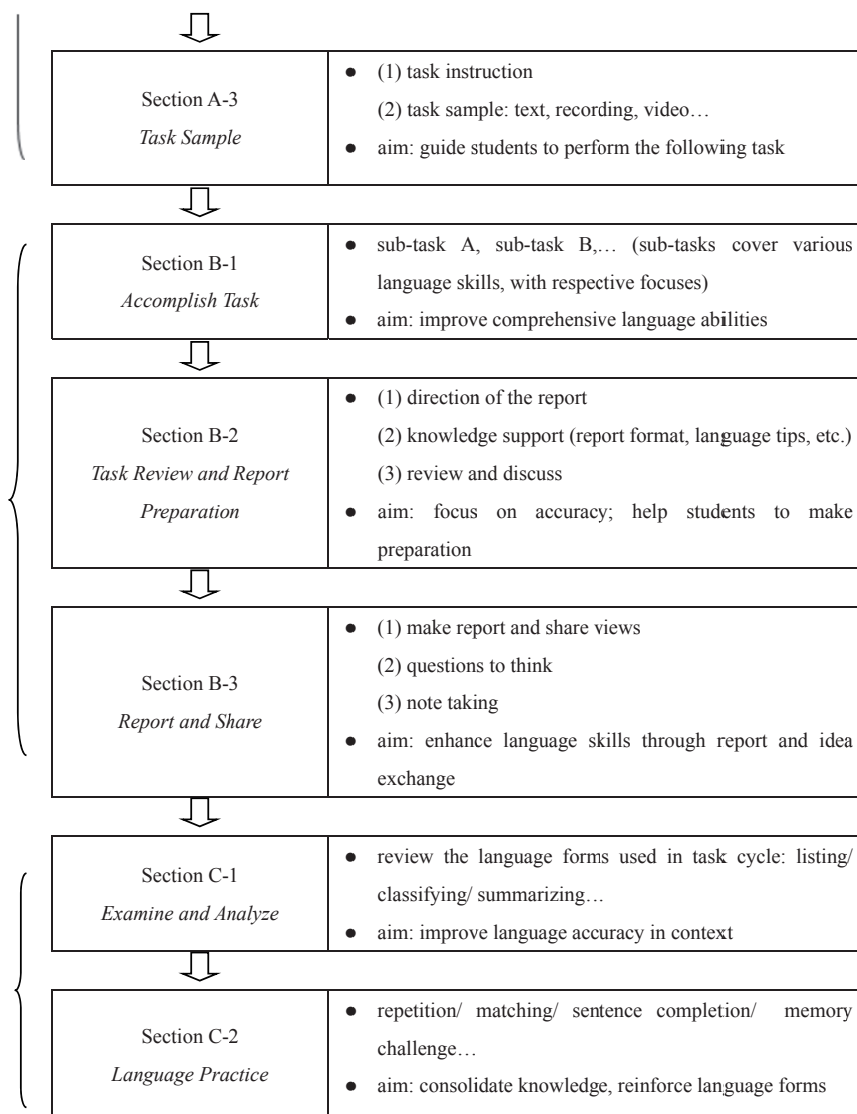


Figure 2 Model of Unit Structure

4.1.1 The Design of the Pre-task Phase

At the pre-task stage, the topic of the task is introduced so as to make students familiar with the context of the task. Students are supposed to look back upon the previously learned knowledge as well as to study some new words, expressions and grammar which are likely to be useful during the process of the task. Then, the instruction of the task is demonstrated by means of message, picture, recording, and video and so on, which can offer examples of the task.

- **Lead-in**

In this section, the general background of the task topic is introduced, so as to draw students' attention and arouse their interest. The unit could begin with a small story, some eye-catching pictures, a beautiful song and the like, which could provide students with a general sense and knowledge of the topic.

For instance, if the overall theme of the unit is environment, then the “Lead-in” section may be constituted of several pictures about environmental problems, methods of protection, future prospects of the earth and so on.

- **Language Activation**

This section aims to give students some tips about the language forms which are likely to be used in the following task. The activation process may help students to recollect the learned expressions as well as offer them some new knowledge.

According to Willis (1996), there are several interesting activities to activate the topic language:

- Classifying words and phrases connected with certain topics and tasks.
- Odd one out (The teacher writes sets of related words and phrases on the board, inserting one item in each set that does not fit and asks students which odd one out is and why.).
- Matching phrases to pictures.
- Memory challenge (This is the same as the matching activity, only the teacher takes the pictures down after one or two minutes, and students must match the phrases or captions to the pictures from memory.).
- Brainstorming and mind-maps (The teacher writes the main topic words in the centre of the board and encourages students to call out other words and phrases, and asks where on the board to write them.).
- Students thinking of questions to a certain topic to ask.
- Teacher recounting a similar experience. (p. 43-44)

As a coursebook for college English, this model would apply to some relatively complex activities, since the ones like “classifying” or “matching” may be too simple for college students. Therefore, this section may encourage students to do brainstorming. They can work in groups to recall the topic-related words, phrases and expressions, and share the ideas within the group. In this way, they may learn from each other and store more language expressions. The coursebook may list several questions or examples as tips.

For instance, in the environment unit of a coursebook, this section may list questions or key phrases as follows:

- What environmental issues are we faced with?
- What are the causes and effects?
- Global warming
- Consequences of deforestation result from deforestation
- Rising sea level
- Damage from flooding

- **Task Sample**

The purpose of this section is to explain how task instructions are given to students. Before students enter the task cycle, they are supposed to be aware of how to perform the task and what the expected outcome is.

Willis (1996) proposed five ways to give the students task instruction:

- Teacher reads out the instructions and/or gives an explanation.
- Students read the textbook instructions by themselves.
- Teacher demonstrates the task with a good student.
- Teacher plays audio or video recording of fluent speakers doing the task.
- Teacher shows the class what previous students have achieved. (p. 45)

In this coursebook model, we suggest that the task sample should be presented to students, by means of text, recording, video and so on. A brief instruction could be added before the sample for students’ reference. Through the task sample, students can get a better understanding of the requirements of the task, which may increase their confidence to start the task cycle. Besides, the task sample could also serve as a part of language activation, providing students with some topic-related expressions.

For instance, the coursebook firstly gives an instruction of the task: “Read the article from the journal and discuss the environmental issues mentioned in it. Summarize the cause, effect, and measures to take.” Then, a short passage about global warming is presented, followed by a recording of a conversation discussing the same topic, and finally an example report is offered. Such a task sample not only serves as guidance for students to perform the task, but can also be regarded as a warm-up activity of reading and listening.

4.1.2 The Design of Task Cycle Phase

The task cycle consists of three steps. Firstly, it requires learners to perform the task, typically in small groups, although it depends on the type of activity. Secondly, when the task has been completed, the learners move on to the planning step, where they complete the preparation for the final report together. Lastly, each group of learners presents their report of the task to the whole class.

- **Accomplish Task**

As to the types of tasks, Willis (1996) suggested six typical types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences and creative tasks (p.26-27). In this model, types which require more language and cognitive abilities (such as problem solving, sharing personal experiences and creative tasks) are to be adopted, given that the coursebook is designed for college students.

In order to make sure that various language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are developed during the task, different aspects should be included in the task process. Therefore, a primary task could consist of several sub-tasks, which are arranged about the same topic but each has its own language focus. Since it would be better not to make the whole task too lengthy and time-consuming, we would integrate the different skills in the sub-tasks. For example, we may design sub-task A for listening and speaking, and then sub-task B for reading and writing, rather than setting up four sub-tasks for the four skills.

For instance, in the environment unit of a coursebook, the primary task could be further divided into two sub-tasks. Sub-task A includes a piece of reading material on the topic of environment, and several following questions for students to think about and discuss. Then they do the reading and hold a group discussion, in which they communicate with each other freely. Sub-task B offers a listening material—a news report of a local environmental problem. After listening, students are required to write a public advertisement to call for social attention to this issue. By performing the sub-tasks, they improve their reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. The whole task therefore becomes comprehensive and substantial.

- **Task Review and Report Preparation**

This section plays a transitional role between the task and the final report. The coursebook gives detailed instructions about how to undertake the report, such as the theme, the objective, the points to be included and so on. In addition, as this section lays more emphasis on language accuracy, some knowledge support could be offered in the coursebook (e.g. introduction of grammar, hints of expressions etc.) Students work in groups to re-analyze the task and organize the report.

For instance, in the environment unit of a coursebook, students are asked to give a report on the topic of a particular environment issue, including its cause, effects, and solutions. Thus they are supposed to make a good summary of the information from materials as well as the opinions in their discussion. Apart from that, they are also required to review the advertisements they have written and present them to the whole class. The coursebook could offer a sample report format and some language tips to help students to prepare.

- **Report and Share**

In this section, students give the group report of the task. It is a process of exchanging views and sharing results. The coursebook can provide several questions for students to consider when they listen to each other’s reports. The book may also leave a space to encourage students to take notes while listening.

For instance, in the environment unit of a coursebook, this section may raise questions as follows:

- Did they take all the causes of the environmental issue into account?
- What solutions did they offer to handle the problem?
- Are their ideas better than ours?
- Are there any excellent words or expressions in their advertisement?

After the report, a Q & A activity can also be arranged.

4.1.3 The Design of Language Focus Phase

In the language focus part, the emphasis returns to the forms of language. The teacher and learners review the whole task, especially paying attention to the key language forms which have appeared during the task process.

● Examine and Analyze

In this section, students are encouraged to look back upon the language used in the task cycle, especially those forms which occur frequently. The coursebook could guide them to undertake the review through approaches such as listing, classifying, summarizing and so on.

For instance, in the environment unit of a coursebook, several sample expressions are listed in different columns, and students are required to summarize the words or phrases (either appearing in the task materials or during the task performance) of the same category and write them down in the relevant columns (see Figure 3). Besides, students could work in pairs and examine each other's writing assignments, analyzing the language forms and correcting the errors. They can also work together to revise and improve their writing.

global warming	lead to	reduce coal burning
water and soil erosion	result in	develop new energy source
.....

Figure 3 Summary of Expressions

● Language Practice

This section offers exercises to help students consolidate the obtained knowledge. Though TBLT mainly focuses on meaning, the reinforcement of language forms is also necessary.

Zhang (2008) suggested four practical types of practice activities:

- repetition of useful phrases or dialogue readings;
- sentence completion (One student or group says only part of the sentence and another student or group completes it);
- matching (Teacher asks students to match verbs with suitable subjects and objects);
- memory challenge (The teacher takes a set of similar types of word from one text or two texts, mixes them up, then asks students to write a complete phrase or sentence containing each item). (p.57-58)

Language practice helps students to digest and assimilate the language knowledge. It is especially important in the Chinese educational context, where various form-focused examinations still play a dominant role.

4.2 Topic and Material Selection

The proper selection of topics and materials is of vital importance in designing a coursebook. As Cunningsworth (2002) states:

Although language coursebooks are primarily a means for facilitating language learning, they cannot simply do that and no more, because language is used in real situations and for real purpose. A study of a language solely as an abstract system would not equip learners to use it in the real world. As a consequence, coursebook must and do present language use as it is actually used and therefore they contain subject matter and deal with topics of various kinds. (p. 86)

In TBLT, it seems to be particularly necessary to choose appropriate topics and materials, since they are the center and the foundation of the task. Good topics and materials may arouse learners' interest of and thus provide them with motivation. Besides, they also serve as illustrations of the aim and purpose of the task. During the selection process, learners' preference and opinions ought to be taken into careful consideration, so that the coursebook could best meet their needs.

In this research, 100 copies of questionnaires were distributed to students who attend the course "College English IV" at Zhejiang University. The total number of completed questionnaires was 97. The collected data showed students' interests and preferences about topics and materials, as well as their standpoint of learning objectives.

4.2.1 Listening

• Material Source

The first question of the survey asks the students which kind of listening material source they prefer. Among the 97 respondents, 45 favor the original materials, which refer to the authentic recording from the real-life situation, such as the BBC/VOA news, the video of English programs and so on. The other 50 prefer the adapted materials, which are modified from the original materials in terms of speed, articulation, vocabulary and the like. Only 2 respondents choose the materials which are specifically made to teach language content.

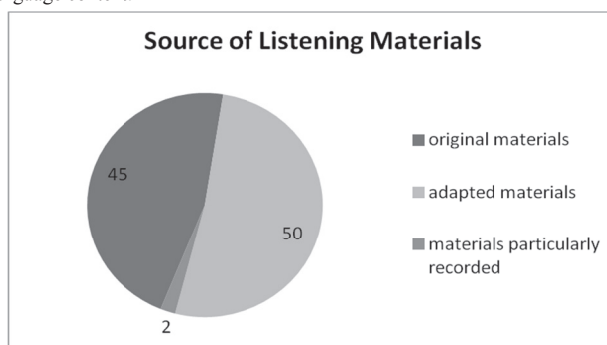


Figure 4 Source of Listening Materials

From the result, we can infer that most of the students would like to listen to materials from real world sources instead of artificial ones. Therefore, it is suggested that the coursebook select listening materials from authentic sources, providing students with the demonstration of real language use. Some adjustments could be made according to the course goals and students' language level.

• Listening Topic

The second question concerns what topics the students are interested in. In the questionnaire, each student is allowed to choose three topics they like most. According to the survey, news, famous speeches and original lines of movies are the most popular of the listening materials, with 60, 59 and 59 votes, respectively. Daily conversations and English songs are also favored by the students. However, the students show less interest in science/art lectures and interviews.

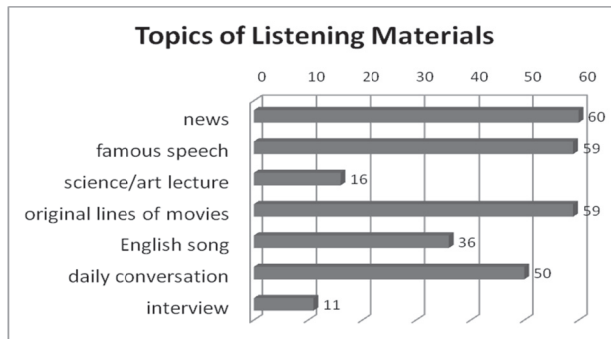


Figure 5 Topics of Listening Materials

The result indicates that various topics and content could be included in the listening materials, but certain types could be given priority. The coursebook could select more English news (from BBC or VOA), excellent speeches or lectures by celebrities, and movie excerpts as listening materials.

- **Accent**

This question aims to investigate students' favorite accent. The British accent gets only 9 votes, while the American accent is preferred by a large proportion of learners, with as many as 42 votes. Nevertheless, nearly half of the students hope that various accents could occur in the listening materials.

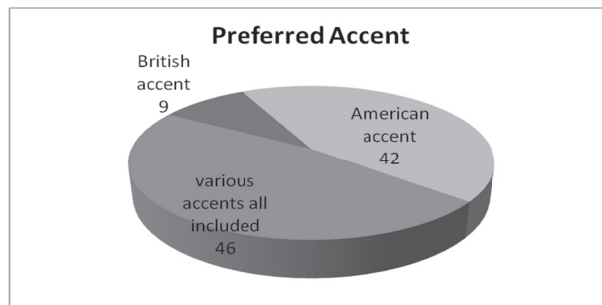


Figure 6 Preferred Accent

Therefore, diverse accents are supposed to be included in the listening materials of the coursebook. The standard accents, especially standard American accent, could play the dominant role. Yet other accents such as Indian accents, Australian accents and accents of different dialects should also be included, since the students may encounter with various accents in the real world.

4.2.2 Reading

- **Material Source**

In the reading part, we first examined students' opinions on the material source. The majority of learners (77) would like to read materials from English newspapers or magazines; 18 of the respondents have interest in literary classics; and just 2 of them wish to read articles translated from Chinese.

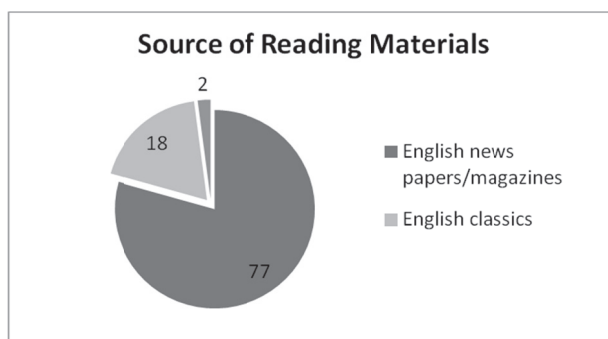


Figure 7 Source of Reading Materials

Accordingly, the coursebook could consider some well-known western publications as the main sources of reading materials such as *Time*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Guardian*. Extracts of classic literature are also beneficial for students. However, translations of Chinese work, which lack the genuine features of the English language, are supposed to be avoided.

• **Reading Topic**

In the survey, the students were asked to choose three favorite reading topics. The result indicates that different topics are all attractive to the students, especially social issues, which rank top one with a total of 79 votes. Topic areas like politics and economy, science and technology, entertainment and fashion, history and culture, sports, literature and art are almost equally welcomed. Only topics of family and emotion, chosen by 14 people, draw less attention.

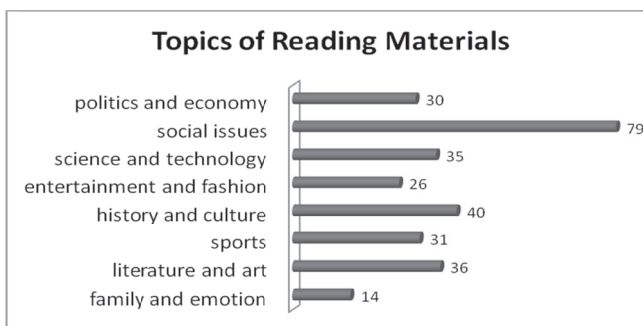


Figure 8 Topics of Reading Materials

Consequently, it is necessary for the coursebook to contain a wide range of reading materials and to focus more on the hot issues in the society, providing the students an open horizon.

• **Purpose of Reading**

When asked about the purpose of reading, 38 students say they want to enhance their reading ability so that it will be helpful in their future study or work; 34 of them wish to broaden the horizon and get a better understanding of the western culture; the other 25 claim that they aim to enrich their language knowledge by learning more phrases, structures, usages and so on.

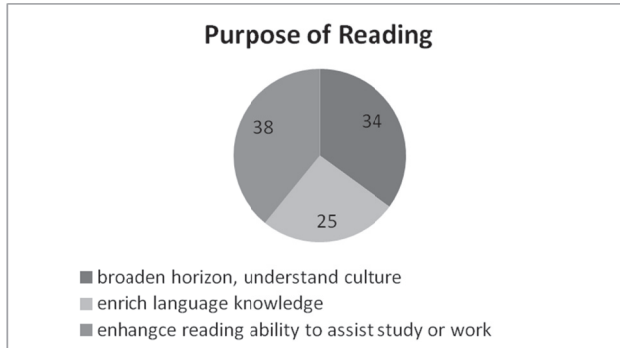


Figure 9 Purpose of Reading

From this result, it can be inferred that the reading materials in the coursebook need not only to be informative, offering various social and culture perspectives, but also to serve as good language examples. Extensive reading and intensive reading could be combined so that both reading speed and deep comprehension could be achieved.

4.2.3 Speaking

- **Speaking Topic**

The survey shows that the students have various interests regarding the speaking topics. The daily conversation is the most favorite speaking topic (83 votes), since it is most frequently used in life. Social issues, formal speeches (e.g. business English), practical topics (e.g. opening an account, ticket reservation) and personal experience follow in decreasing frequency.

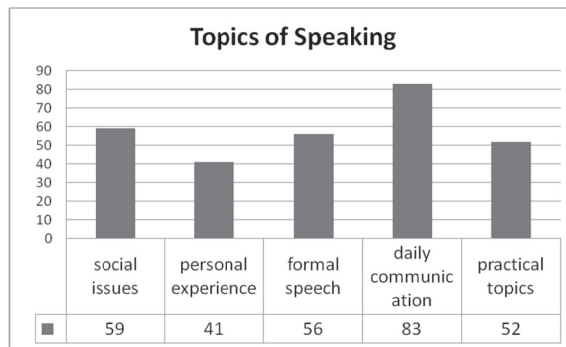


Figure 10 Topics of Speaking

It can be seen from the survey that the students hope to speak about diverse topics. Still, the frequency of use is important to students, which means that topics which usually occur in common life are most preferred. Thus, the coursebook could design the speaking tasks accordingly, picking more topics which will be beneficial for the students in their daily study and life.

- **Speaking Form**

As to the forms of speaking, more than half of the students prefer conversations in pairs or group discussion; nearly one third like the form of role play, and 18 of the students favor individual report or speech.

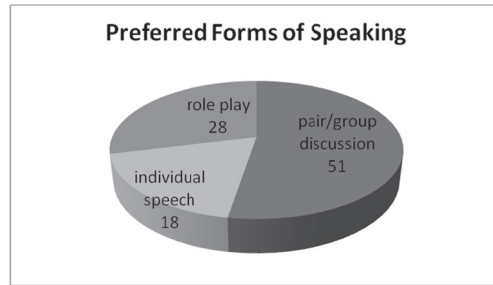


Figure 11 Preferred Forms of Speaking

Therefore, the coursebook should design more tasks for group discussion, group presentation and the like, providing a comfortable atmosphere for students to communicate and encourage them to cooperate with each other as well. However, after the students possess a certain level of proficiency, individual speaking should also be added in.

4.2.4 Writing

- **Writing Topic**

Students' preference of writing topics mainly concentrates on the relatively familiar areas. Topics of social/culture perspectives and college life or other personal experience share the majority of the votes. Practical writing types such as letters, notes, CV and so on are also regarded as important, as is academic writing. However, literary writing and business writing are less popular, perhaps because they are not very close to students' life.

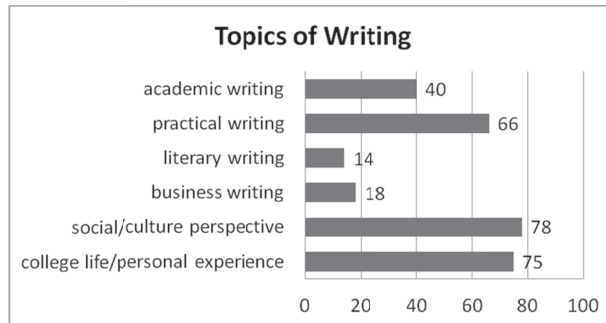


Figure 12 Topics of Writing

Therefore, in the coursebook, there should be more writing topics which encourage students to express their own thoughts or share their own experience. The writing styles of practical use are also expected to be promoted in the coursebook.

- **Writing Skill**

In terms of which writing skill they desire to develop, as many as 68 students consider language proficiency as the most essential aspect. They hope that their language in writing could be smooth and brilliant. Another 25 respondents think that the logic of organizing ideas is also significant. The remaining four respondents say that they wish to learn more about the standard writing format.

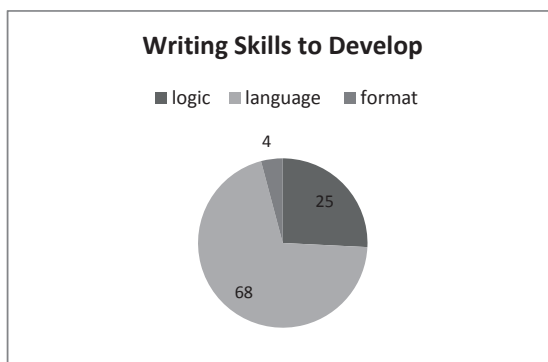


Figure 13 Writing Skills to Develop

According to the result, when designing the writing tasks, more emphasis could be given to language competence. Logical thoughts should be trained through writing as well. The coursebook could also include some knowledge of the standard formats of various writing types.

5. Conclusion

This research has explored the design of English language learning TBLT coursebooks. The structure of the designed task-based coursebook model resembles Willis' framework to a great extent. Therefore, this model can offer direction for the application of TBLT. Moreover, as to the details of the task design, realistic factors have been considered so that the coursebook can really fit the particular learner group, namely, Chinese college students. In addition, in terms of the task topics and materials, students' opinions have been investigated. From the result of the survey, we can discover learners' preference and needs, and thus design the coursebook accordingly.

Due to the limited time and resources, there are still many limitations in this research. Firstly, the task-based coursebook model is designed mainly according to Willis' framework, leaving out many other theories and perspectives. Secondly, as the coursebook model only possesses a theoretical basis, its practicability and validity still need to be testified. Also, as the survey sample is small, we cannot say that the result of the survey can represent the opinion of all the college students in China. Therefore, related further researches are expected.

TBLT is a promising pedagogical approach which can help facilitate the language learning process. Hopefully, this paper may make some contribution to the application of TBLT and the development of college English education in China.

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