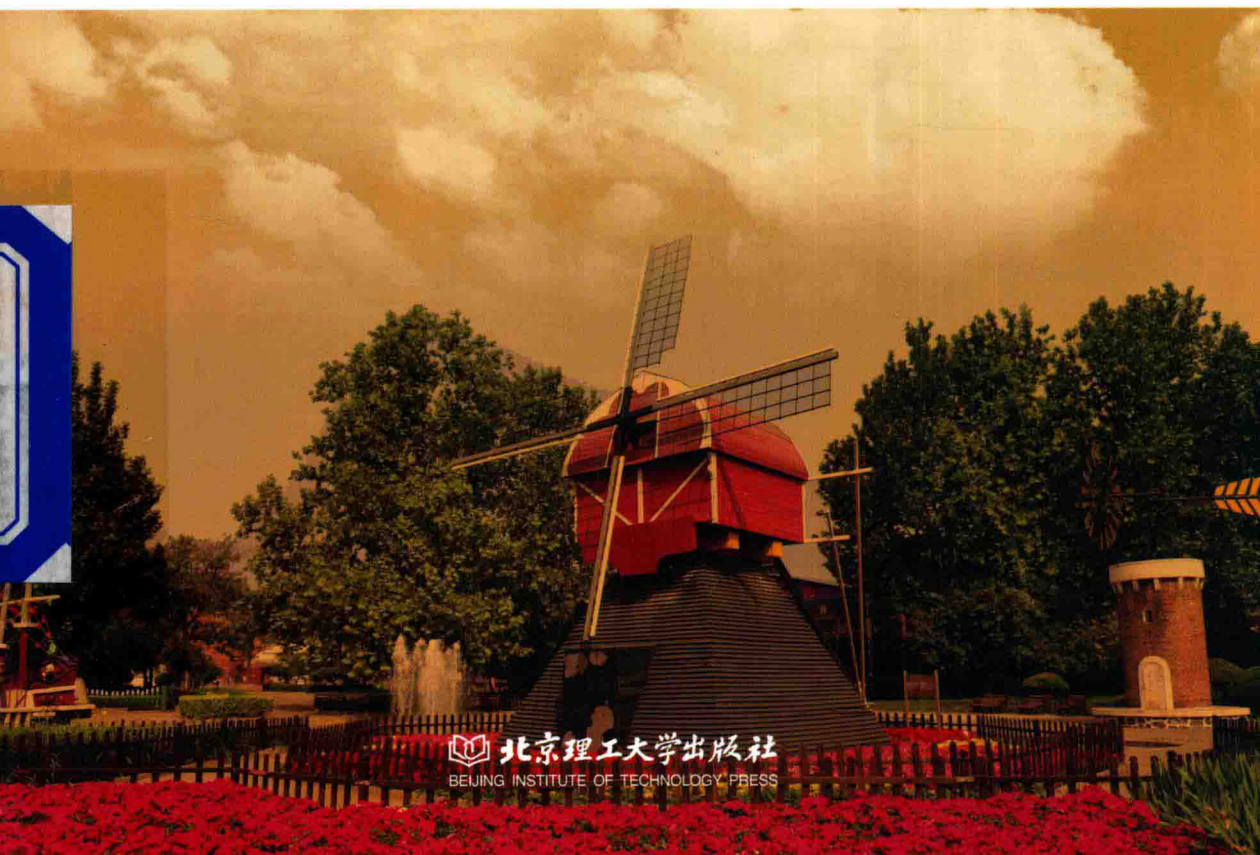
外语教学指导与学术研究系列丛书

Study on the Evaluation of Multi-media Course-books with Regard to Learner Autonomy
—An Empirical Study at a Chinese University

基于培养学习者自主性的多媒体教材评估研究

◎ 梁铜华 著



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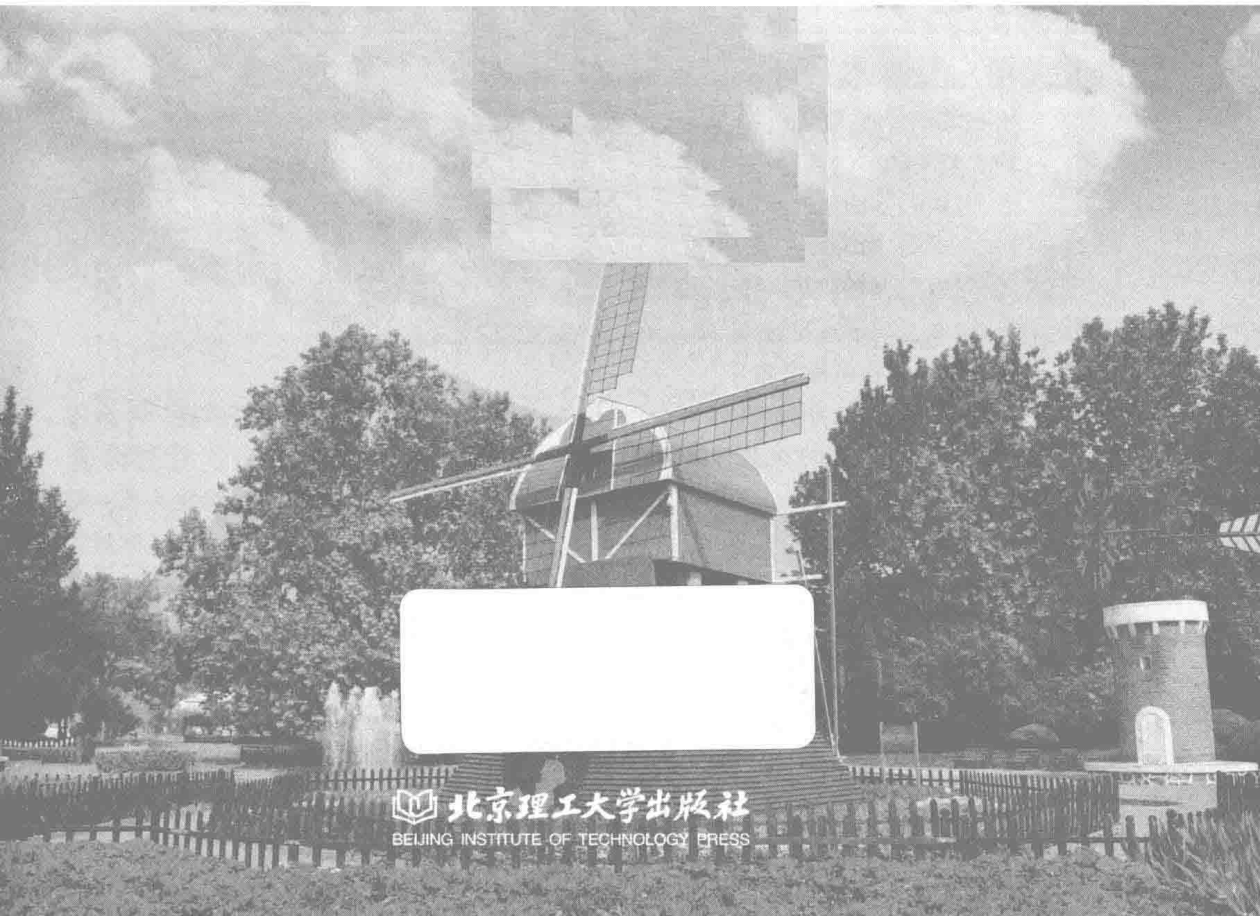

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前　言

20 世纪 80 年代以来，自主学习作为一种教育目标、学习过程、学习模式和教学模式受到空前的重视并得到广泛研究，多媒体教材也应运而生。在我国，探究自主学习能力和进行多媒体教学关系的研究才刚刚起步，很多方面尚未成熟，本研究正是在这样的背景下进行的。

本研究旨在 1）探究学习者对英语，尤其是英语听说能力的需求情况；2）探究学习者目前自主学习能力的情况；3）探究现行多媒体教材的利弊及相关问题；4）探究学习者英语学习需求、自主学习能力和教材评估之间的关系，为更好地培养学习者自主学习能力，完善多媒体教材及其应用提供依据。

本研究在北京理工大学非英语专业的本科生中进行。研究工具共有 3 种：非结构式访谈、开放式问题问卷、封闭式问题问卷。研究的多媒体教材为北京理工大学正在采用的清华大学出版社出版的《新时代交互英语》和高等教育出版社出版的《大学体验英语》的视听说教材部分。先通过与在 7 个学院任课的 13 位英语老师进行非结构式访谈确定了选题并选定了进行问卷调查的学院。又通过在北京理工大学讲授上述两套教材的 8 位教师和正在学习上述两套教材的 137 位学习者当中做开放式问题问卷调查，大致确定了研究目的，并为封闭式问题问卷的设计提供题项和依据。封闭式问题问卷设计完毕后先在一个班进行了试测，然后将发现的问题改进后在北京理工大学未做过开放式问题问卷的七个学院的、正使用上述两套教材的学生中进行了大规模封闭式问卷调查。问卷调查采用的是随课堂做问卷。最后，得到有效问卷 356 份。其中 160 份问卷的答卷者使用的教材是《新时代交互英语》，196 份问卷的答卷者使用的教材是《大学体验英语》。本

研究对实验数据的分析采用了 SPSS 软件包中的信度分析、 因子分析、 相关性分析、平均值计算以及样本求和等统计方法。

数据分析表明：在本研究中，发现有 5 个因子影响学习者英语听说学习过程及效果：1）对英语的需求评估；2）对英语听说技能的需求评估；3）自主学习能力评估；4）教材评估；5）教材的附加效果评估。其中自主学习能力评估与其他各因子都相关；教材评估与英语需求评估不相关而与其他因子都相关。

研究结果表明：1）学习者对英语的需求，尤其是对英语听说的需求愿望强烈，符合时代的需求。2）学习者的自主学习能力普遍较弱，主要原因也许是在我国教育制度和思想观念上。由于近期的出版物表明自主学习已经发展成为一个独立的研究领域，具有自己的理论体系和研究成果，所以，我国有必要为广大教师进行这方面的培训，使教师不仅能培养学习者的自主学习能力，还能将自主学习理论和研究成果应用到教材的设计、完善工作当中，使教材更有利于学习者的自主学习。3）学习者对《新时代交互英语》的互动性、选材、难度、词汇等方面评价较高，但是对其内容的繁冗，尤其是语法的讲解感到不满；对《大学体验英语》的互动性、版式设计和图像质量等方面比较满意，但是对其声音效果、选材、难度、词汇和语法讲解等方面评价较低。有关专家、学者及出版商应该做进一步调查，以便对这两套教材做适时的修订完善工作。4）现代教育技术和设备有待于进一步完善，在操作上存在较大问题。5）学习者普遍认为人机互动、师生互动、学生与学生互动的教学模式效果很好，应该大力推广。

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Preface

The present research attempts to explore the feasible ways to develop interesting and practical multimedia course-books for college English listening and speaking with regard to learner autonomy by both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data from interviews and questionnaires. The research subjects are 356 non-English majors at Beijing Institute of Technology in Beijing , China.

The major objectives for this research include:

1) To investigate the students' learning needs for English, especially for aural and oral English;

2) To explore the students' ability in learning autonomy;

3) To explore the strengths and weaknesses of the in-use multi-media course-books for English listening and speaking with regard to learner autonomy;

4) To explore the relationships between learners' needs, learner autonomy and the evaluation of course-books.

This book is made up of five parts. The first two parts include a brief introduction and literature review, together with the objectives and significance of the present research. The literature review consists of two aspects: learner autonomy and course-book evaluation. First, the researcher accepts Holec's definition (1981:3) and Boud's ideas (1988:17) of learner autonomy, and illustrates the necessities of fostering learner autonomy. Then Phil Benson's three major components of learner autonomy are reviewed. And Based on the thoughts of Holec, Boud and

Phil Benson, etc., four approaches to the development of learner autonomy are discussed. Second, on the basis of Brian Tomlinson's definition of "language-learning materials" (1998:2) and the definition of "textbook" in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1998), the researcher defines the modern multimedia course-books and illustrates the role of course-books. Next, the types, processes and guidelines of course-book evaluation are reviewed, together with the illustration of the rationale for evaluating course-books.

The third part introduces the methodology. Altogether, 3 instruments are employed: 1) unstructured interviews; 2) questionnaire with open questions; 3) questionnaire with closed questions. The subjects, research design and data collection are reported.

In the fourth part, statistical analyses of the quantitative data are presented, and the results and discussions are then reported with pedagogical implications. The factor analysis of the data produces 5 major factors: 1) needs for English; 2) needs for English listening and speaking; 3) learner autonomy; 4) evaluation of course-books, and 5) additional effects of course-books. And among the five major factors, "learner autonomy" is significantly correlated with the other four factors while "evaluation of course-books" correlates with the other factors except "needs for English," possibly because the targeted course-books center on the practice of English listening and speaking.

The part of conclusion summarizes the major findings, limitations of the research and suggestions for further research in this area.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all for giving me the strength and perseverance to continue, and for leading me when I did not think I could make it.

I would like to express my heartfelt and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Wu Hongyun. I greatly appreciate her careful reading of the several drafts of this book. Her insights, wisdom, and kindness have had a positive impact on my developments as a researcher. And her patience, support and encouragement continue to accompany me through this challenging, yet rewarding process. The research reported in this book would not have been possible without her patient and frequent encouragement.

I would like to thank my friends, such as Huo Dongye, Chen Xiuzhen, Dong Yulin, Lao Qing, Zhang Huaping, and Hu Ping, for their assistance at the preliminary stage of this research.

Many thanks should also be given to all the participants of this research for their generous help during the data collection, and to my friends and colleagues for their invaluable assistance during the administration of the questionnaire.

I give special thanks to my parents, my husband and my daughter for their unfailing understanding and love.

As the writer of the book, the shortcomings that remain are, of course, my responsibility.

Contents

List of Tables 1
List of Figures 1
Chapter 1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background information 1
1.2 Objectives of the research 3
1.3 Rationale for the research 4
Chapter 2 Literature Review 6
2.1 Definition of learner autonomy 7
2.2 Rationale for promoting learner autonomy 8
2.3 Major components of learner autonomy 9
2.3.1 Learning management 10
2.3.2 Cognitive processes 10
2.3.3 Learner control over learning contents 11
2.4 Approaches to the development of learner autonomy 11
2.4.1 Analyzing learners' needs 11
2.4.2 Multiplying teacher's roles 12
2.4.3 Enhancing the use of technology 13
2.4.4 Ensuring the quality of course-books 14
2.5 Research on course-book evaluation 15
2.5.1 Definitions of course-book and related terms 15
2.5.2 Roles of course-books 16
2.5.3 Types of course-book evaluation 17
2.5.4 Processes and means of the course-book evaluation 18

2.5.5 Rationale for evaluating course-books with regard to learner autonomy ····· 19
2.5.6 Guidelines for course-book evaluation ····· 20
Chapter 3 Methodology ····· 22
3.1 Rationale for using different research tools ····· 23
3.2 Unstructured interviews ····· 24
3.2.1 Subjects ····· 24
3.2.2 Procedures ····· 25
3.2.3 Findings ····· 26
3.3 Questionnaire with open questions ····· 27
3.3.1 Subjects ····· 27
3.3.2 Design of the questionnaire ····· 27
3.3.3 Data-analysis ····· 28
3.3.3.1 Students' responses to the questionnaire ····· 28
3.3.3.2 Teachers' responses to the questionnaire ····· 31
3.4 Questionnaire with closed questions ····· 33
3.4.1 Design ····· 33
3.4.2 Subjects ····· 34
3.4.3 Data-analysis ····· 34
Chapter 4 Results and Discussion ····· 37
4.1 Factor analysis ····· 37
4.1.1 Exploring the data's appropriateness for factor analysis ····· 37
4.1.2 Identifying the factors ····· 39
4.1.3 Naming the factors and reporting the results ····· 39
4.2 Discussions about the major factors ····· 44
4.2.1 Subjects' learner autonomy ····· 44
4.2.2 Evaluation of course-books with regard to

learner autonomy ····· 47
4.2.2.1 External evaluation of the course-books ····· 47
4.2.2.2 Internal evaluation of the course-books ····· 50
4.2.2.3 Overall evaluation of the course-books ····· 52
4.2.3 Additional effects of the course-books ····· 54
4.2.4 Subjects' needs for English ····· 55
4.2.5 Subjects' needs for English listening and speaking ····· 57
4.3 Correlations between the five major factors ····· 61
Chapter 5 Conclusions ····· 67
5.1 Findings ····· 67
5.2 Limitations of the research ····· 68
5.3 Suggestions for further research ····· 69
Bibliography ····· 71
Appendices ····· 80
Appendix One Checklist of the unstructured interview ····· 80
Appendix Two 教师调查问卷 ····· 81
Appendix Three 学生调查问卷 ····· 82
Appendix Four Questionnaire ····· 83
Appendix Five Factual details of materials to be evaluated ····· 93

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List of Tables

Table 1 Recurring Themes in the Questionnaire for Students ····· 29
Table 2 Recurring Themes in the Questionnaire for Teachers ····· 31
Table 3 Reliability Coefficient Alpha (Tsinghua Group) ····· 35
Table 4 Reliability Coefficient Alpha (Gaojiao Group) ····· 35
Table 5 KMO and Bartlett's Test for Tsinghua Group ····· 38
Table 6 KMO and Bartlett's Test for Gaojiao Group ····· 38
Table 7 Value Criteria of KMO ····· 38
Table 8 Five Factors in Gaojiao Group ····· 40
Table 9 Five Factors in Tsinghua Group ····· 41
Table 10 Eigenvalue and Cumulative Variance of Each Factor ····· 42
Table 11 Loadings of Items Involved in Each Factor ····· 42
Table 12 Means for F1 (Learner Autonomy) ····· 44
Table 13 Case Summaries of Item 27 ····· 46
Table 14 Elements in External Evaluation of Course-books ····· 47
Table 15 Means of Items Concerning the External Evaluation of the Course-books ····· 48
Table 16 Percentages of the Number of Cases of Item 45 (the Wanted Items in Learner Autonomy) ····· 48
Table 17 Descriptive Statistics of Item 52 ····· 50
Table 18 Means of Items 43, 46 and 47 in Both Tsinghua Group and Gaojiao Group ····· 51
Table 19 Means of Item 38 (Overall Evaluation of the Course-books) ····· 52

Table 20 Means of Items 48, 49, 50, 51, 54 and 59 ····· 55
Table 21 Case Summaries for F3 (Needs for English) ····· 56
Table 22 Personal Information of the Subjects in Both Groups····· 57
Table 23 Means of F4 (Needs for English Listening and Speaking) ····· 57
Table 24 Means of Item 23 ····· 58
Table 25 Case Summaries of Item 17 (Preferred Ways to Practice English Listening and Speaking)····· 60
Table 26 Correlations Between Learner Autonomy and the Other Factors for Tsinghua Group ····· 62
Table 27 Correlations Between Learner Autonomy and the Other Factors for Gaojiao Group ····· 62
Table 28 Correlations Between Evaluation of Course-books and the Other Factors for Tsinghua Group····· 64
Table 29 Correlations Between Evaluation of Course-books and the Other Factors for Gaojiao Group ····· 64

List of Figures

Figure 1 Scree Plot for Tsinghua Group ····· 39
Figure 2 Scree Plot for Gaojiao Group ····· 39

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background information

"When discussing the educational challenge posed by new information and communication technologies (IT), it is often said that we need a radical change in our approaches to teaching and learning in order to best prepare future generations for living and working in the information society" (Bernd Rüschoff, 1998). In China, the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education of China, also thought of this, arranged related experts to draw up the *College English Curriculum Requirements (For Trial Implementation)* (*Requirement* hereafter) through a series of discussions, and gave effect to it in 2004.

The *Requirement* insists that "The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in an all-round way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future work and social interactions they will be able to exchange information effectively through both spoken and written channels." Then, "the cultivation of students' abilities to listen and speak has become a topical issue of college English teaching research" (You, 2005), and many "experiments of improving students' listening and speaking competence" (You, 2005) by various means have been done in China.

"In the last few years, there have been dramatic changes in the ways that languages are taught with the replacement of grammar translation by communicative approaches and the introduction of technological tools" (Vu Thi Phuong Thao, 2005). In China, the *Requirement* (2004) clearly points out that, "in view of the marked increase in student enrollments and the relatively limited resources, colleges and universities should remould the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching by introducing new teaching models with the help of multimedia and network technology".

The *Requirement* (2004) emphasizes that "the new model should be built on modern information technology, particularly network technology, so that English language teaching will be free (to a certain extent) 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, mobilize the initiative of both teachers and students, and attach particular importance to the central role of students in the teaching and learning process. This model should technically attain to a high level of interactivity, feasibility and operability. In addition, it should take into full account and incorporate into it the strengths of the current model while fully employing modern information technology."

The *Requirement* (2004) also says that "colleges and universities should each design a PC-based or intranet- or campus-network-based multimedia listening and speaking teaching model that suits their own needs in line with their own conditions and student situation. Those in more favorable situations may deliver listening and speaking course via the Internet. The teaching of reading, writing and translation can be conducted either in the classroom or online. In either case, however,

enough teachers should be guaranteed for instructions or lectures."

So, in response to the appeal from the Ministry of Education of China, "Multi-media and network teaching and learning model is practiced and generalized in every institution of higher education in China" (Wang Jianmei, Sun Chunlei, 2005), and greater importance is attached to the student-centered pattern of language teaching, the development of multi-media course-books and the cultivation of the learner autonomy.

1.2 Objectives of the research

Since a new round of reform in college English teaching and learning began in 2002, PC-based or intranet- or campus-network-based multimedia teaching mode of English listening and speaking have begun to take shape and be promoted among 180 universities in China (Cai, 2005). Computer-assisted oral English test was conducted by College English Center, Fudan University (Qiu, 2005). The promotion and management of autonomy learning, the role orientation and the role shift of the teachers in the new listening and speaking teaching mode have been explored (Zhu, 2005; Wang, 2005). More and more multimedia course-books for English listening and speaking have been published and they have been experimented in more and more universities and colleges. As an editor, the researcher should not ignore such changes. It is necessary for her to do some research on the course-books in use before carrying out her idea — to foster learner autonomy by publishing better and better course-books.

The research is, therefore, undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

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