CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The impressionistic method was first used to provide information about the publication and organization of the four textbooks. Then, tasks in Unit 4 and Unit 7 in each of textbooks were analyzed using the checklist method. The tasks not requiring output were not analyzed further. The tasks with opportunities for output were analyzed in detail. The in-depth method was used to put a value on the results of the analysis.

Analysis Using the Impressionistic Method

The impressionistic method helps readers obtain a general impression of the material. It was used to describe the selected four textbooks one by one.

Practical Skills Improvement in Business English (PSIBE1)

PSIBE1 has a mixed syllabus of functions, situations and topics. There are eleven units in this book. Six units are organized around topics, involving visits and travels, job-hunting, cultural clashes, advertising, international trade and organizational structure. Three units are functions, including introductions, complaints and business appointments. The other two units are situations, relating to restaurants and working places (Lu & Sun, 2003).

Every unit has the same structure, including a brief introduction of the unit, then listening, speaking, reading and writing sections. In each section there are tasks for students to do. All five sections are examined in this study. The sections are as follows:

1) A brief introduction gives the reason for including the content in the unit. This is given in both English and Chinese to show the significance of the unit.

2) The listening section includes three activities: a) study new expressions and words, listen to a conversation and fill in the blanks; b) study new words and expressions, listen to a conversation and judge if statements are true or false; and c) listen to the conversation again and answer given questions. The content of the conversations is business background knowledge.

3) The speaking section has two conversations in English with accompanying new words and expressions. After studying these, learners do two exercises with their partners to act out events in business situations. The main output opportunities in whole unit are provided in these two exercises. Chinese versions of the conversations are offered after the exercises.

4) The reading section includes a brief introduction to a reading article in Chinese, followed by an article on business, new words and expressions, and notes on the text.

5) Writing is the last section. Translation of sentences from English to Chinese, and Chinese to English is the exercise in this section.

A table of contents and an introduction at the front of the book give readers an overview of the whole book. At the end of the book, transcripts of listening sections of the whole book are offered in both English and Chinese. Chinese translations of reading articles and the key to translation exercises are provided at the end of the

book.

Unit 7 of PSIBE1 is included in Appendix A as a sample unit.

Into Business with English (IBE1)

IBE1 has a mixed syllabus of functions, topics and situations. There are fifteen

units in the book. Eight of them are topic based, involving the business world,

personnel, marketing and advertising, sales, facts and figures and the festive season.

Five functions are related to plans and arrangements, problems, communications,

entertaining and introductions. Two situations are at the office and going to places

(UIBE,1996). Each unit has the same structure, including four sections, and additional

exercises and vocabulary lists, all of which are included in the present study. In each

section, there are various tasks designed according to the topic, the function or the

situation of the unit.

In the beginning of the first and the third sections, the topics, the functions or

the situations in this unit are introduced first. Then discussion or role-play is used to

help learners to be familiar with this topic. All activities in four sections are designed

related to the content of the unit.

In all four sections, vocabulary and grammar are introduced in different places.

Reading, writing, listening and speaking activities are included in the four sections in

a variety of ways. Speaking activities, including discussion, conversation, role-play

and information gaps, are usually the most frequent activities in each unit.

Writing activities, including pre-writing, and writing, follow as the second

most frequent activities. For example, there are ten speaking activities and four

writing activities in Unit 3; there are seven speaking activities and five writing

activities in Unit 2.

Reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary activities make up the remainder of the units. In some units, there are more listening activities than reading activities. In other units there are more reading activities than listening activities. Grammar and vocabulary are the two smallest sections in units. Some activities ask learners to practice new language forms or new words. Other activities focus on learners' communicative needs in the business situations. Some activities relate to learners' personal background, others just need information from the textbook. Additional exercises include two or three exercises about pronunciation. Vocabulary lists include all new vocabulary both in English and Chinese.

In the front of the book, a table of contents, an introduction and a detailed syllabus guide readers to know the content in the whole book. Transcripts for listening activities from fifteen units and grammar index of the whole book are offered at the end of the book. Language reference boxes which include grammar items and useful expressions and a cultural glossary are given in appendices to the book.

Unit 4 of IBE1 is given in Appendix B as sample unit.

Skills for Business English (SBE2)

SBE2 follows a topic syllabus. There are twelve units in the book, with topics including companies and products, travel and tourism, economic trends, better ways of working, and competition (Mascull, 2002).

In each unit, there are three or four functions, for example, the topic of competition includes giving opinions and exchanging information. Each unit has the same structure with three sections: listening, speaking and reading & writing. All of

them are examined in the present study. In each section, there are various tasks designed according to the topic and the functions of this unit.

Before the three sections, the key vocabulary in each section is introduced by exercises, such as matching, filling the blanks and multiple-choice. Different activities are designed for listening, reading & writing and speaking sections in each unit.

Role-play has an important role in this book. In the speaking section of each unit, there is a role-play activity where pairs of learners play roles in various business situations. Instructions, language and information about the roles are offered for the speakers. After each unit, a vocabulary and notes section lists all new vocabulary and expressions in both English and Chinese.

A map of the book is given to help readers get information about the book. Transcripts and answers to exercises are offered at the end of the book.

Unit 7 of SBE2 is a sample unit in Appendix C.

First Insights into Business (FIB1)

FIB1 follows a topic syllabus. There are twelve units in the book, with topics including "customers, companies, travel, troubleshooting, products, company history, retailing, people, business environment, finance, corporate responsibility and competition"(Robbins,2003). Each unit has the same structure, including language focus, skills, vocabulary and business communication. All are considered in the present study. In each section, there are various tasks designed for learners according to the topic of this unit.

1) In the language focus section, language items are practiced in different formats such as multiple-choice, gap-filling and matching. Pronunciation is included

in this section.

2) Skills building in this book includes writing, reading and listening. There are several activities in each part with a variety of formats.

3) The key vocabulary section includes the key words and expressions in activities to help the learners to learn.

4) The business communication section includes complex tasks requiring a number of different language skills.

After each three units, there is a review of reading, vocabulary, grammar, writing and business communication. In the beginning of the book, there is a syllabus to give readers information about the book. Information for speakers B and C in role-play activities in the business communication sections, transcripts of listening texts, grammar reference and word lists in English and Chinese are offered at the end of the book.

Unit 4 of FIB1 lists in Appendix D as a sample unit.

Analysis by Using the Checklist Method

In this section, tasks in Unit 4 and Unit 7 in each of four textbooks are analyzed by using the checklist method.

Practical Skills Improvement in Business English (PSIBE1)

The checklist was used to analyze the tasks in two units (Unit 4 is in Appendix E; Unit 7 is in Appendix F) one by one from the first book, PSIBE1. The checklist is used to analyze the amounts and the types of opportunities for output.

How many opportunities for output are provided by PSIBE1?

Percentages of opportunities of output are calculated to gain an overall picture of the textbook. There are 18 tasks in both Unit 4 and Unit 7. Together, there are 36 tasks in these two units of PSIBE1. From the analysis, most of the tasks (26 tasks, 72%) do not offer opportunities for output. Those tasks provide input for the learners, such as new words and expressions, Chinese translations, background introductions and notes on the texts. No task asks for graphic output. There are 10 from 36 tasks (28%) that provide opportunities for output. These are discussed in more detail below.

What kinds of opportunities for output are provided in PSIBE1?

Tasks requiring output in units 4 and 7 of PSIBE1 have been analyzed in three aspects: a) what content is the learner expected to deal with; b) with whom; and c) what is the learner expected to do? These reflect the three aspects of tasks, namely: 1) content that the learners are to focus on; 2) participation, concerned with whom the learners are to work; and 3) the processes through which learners are to go. These three aspects of tasks that requiring output in Unit 4 and Unit 7 in PSIBE1 are analyzed in detail with examples following the checklist in Table 1.

Table 1

Opportunities of Output in Unit 4 and Unit 7 of PSIBE1

Title: PSIBE1 (Unit 4 and Unit 7)			Publisher: Dalian University of Technology Press	
Total Amount of Tasks: 36			Tasks with language output: 10	
1. CONTENT	A. Form: Expected Output	Graphic (picture, illustration, photograph and diagram)		0
		Oral words/phrases/sentences		2?
		Oral extended discourse		4
		Written words/ phrases/ sentences		4 + 2?
		Written extended discourse		0
	B. Source	Materials		6 m+2 m/l
		Learners		2 l+2 m/l
	C. Nature of Content	Personal information/opinion		1 opinion
		Fiction		9
		Non—fiction		0
		Linguistic items		0
		Metalinguistic comment		0
2. PARTICIPATION		Learners individually simultaneously		6
		Learners in pairs / One-to-one spoken interaction		4
		Learners in groups / Multi-person spoken interaction		0
		Learners to class / Spoken monologue		0
3. PROCESS	A. Level of Discourse Control	Initiate		2
		Respond		8
	B. Focus	Language system (rules, patterns, items or forms)		2
		Meaning		4
		Meaning/system relationship (Both meaning and form)		4
	C. Mental Operation	Repeat identically / repeat selectively		2
		Repeat with substitution		0
		Review own foreign language output		0
		Formulate/hypothesize language rule		0
		Repeat with transformation		0
		Repeat with expansion		2
		Apply stated language rule		0
		Formulate items into large unit		0
		Hypothesize explanation/description/meaning of something		0
		Decode semantic/propositional meaning		1
		Select information		4
		Categorize selected information		0
		Translate from L1 to L2		2
		Translate from L2 to L1		1
		Negoatiate to accomplish communicative task		4

Note: tasks marked with "?" have ambiguous directions for oral or written output.

Content. The contents that learners are expected to deal with in tasks requiring output in Unit 4 and Unit 7 in PSIBE1 have been subdivided into 1) form of expected output; 2) source; and 3) nature of content.

A. Form of expected output. There are written words/phrases/sentences and oral extended discourse tasks in PSIBE1. For example, Task 2 and Task 18 in both units ask for written words/phrases/sentences from learners: "Translate the Following Sentences"(p32, 58) and "Listen to the following conversation and fill the missing parts in the blanks"(p23, 50). Communicative tasks require oral extended discourse. Two tasks can be used to produce either oral words/phrases/sentences or written words/phrases/sentences. For instance, Task 6 in the two units asks learners to "Listen to the tape again and answer the questions" (p24, 52). However, there are no tasks asking for written extended discourse or graphic output. Learners do not have chances to write essays or any other longer texts.

B. Source. Two tasks require information for producing output from both material and learners. Learners make a complaint in Task 11 of Unit 4 and apologize in Task 12 of Unit 4 following steps determined by the materials (p27), but detailed information needs to be offered by them. Two tasks ask for information solely from learners to complete the tasks. In Task 11 of Unit 7, learners give their opinion about television advertising in pairs. Task 12 in Unit 7 is a role-play task, learners act as computer sellers who explain the features of computer in pairs, creating conversations in imaginary situations. Six tasks use fictional information offered by material. For example, Task 2 in both units asks learners to fill in blanks and Task 6 in both units asks learners to answer questions, all with information from recorded material.

C. Nature of content. Task 11 in Unit 7 needs the learners' personal opinion about television advertising. The other nine tasks that have opportunities for output all

involve fictional content. For example, Task 12 in Unit 7 and tasks 11 and 12 in Unit

4 are dialogues between imaginary characters. No non-fictional texts, linguistic items

and metalinguistic comment are involved in tasks requiring output in PSIBE1.

Participation. Learners work individually and simultaneously in most of the

tasks without information transfer or interaction with others. For example, learners fill

in blanks, translate sentences and answer questions individually in tasks 2, 6 and 18 of

two units. Four communicative tasks give learners chances to work in pairs to discuss

and close information gaps through one-to-one spoken interaction with a two-way

information flow. Learners get indirect feedback from the response of their partners.

No tasks ask learners to work in groups, where they have multi-person interaction, or

face the whole class, such as giving spoken monologues in PSIBE1.

Processes. The processes through which learners are to go have been analyzed

in three aspects: 1) level of discourse control; 2) focus; and 3) operation.

A. Level of discourse control. Most of the tasks (8 tasks among 10 tasks)

expect learners to express themselves through language that has been narrowly

defined. For example, tasks 2 and 6 in the two units ask learners to fill the blanks and

answer the questions by using information offered by recordings in the listening

section. Only two tasks in Unit 7 give learners freedom to express what they wish to

say without any kind of script. Task 11 asks learners to express their opinion of TV

advertising freely. They make a conversation between imaginary characters in Task 12.

B. Focus. Among tasks requiring output in PSIBE1, there are two translation

tasks (Task 18 in two units) that focus on language form, in which learners just need

to find correct language patterns to complete their translation. Task 6 in Unit 4 and

tasks 6, 11, 12 in Unit 7 are four output opportunities that focus on meaning, without any limitation of language use. For example, meaning is important in offering correct answers to the questions in Task 6 in Unit 4 that asks for answers to comprehension questions on a listening passage. Tasks 2, 11, 12 in Unit 4 and Task 2 in Unit 7 are four tasks that focus on both language items and meaning. For example, learners need to pay attention to both meaning and form in Task 2 when they fill the blanks.

C. Mental operations. Task 2 in both two units asks learners to fill in blanks after listening to the conversation. They need to choose correct information from conversations and choose language forms before repeating given language. In Task 6 of both two units, learners listen to a conversation to select correct information and answer questions. They also need to decode the surface meaning of the given language in Task 6 of Unit 7. Task 18 of both two units is a translation task that offers chances for learners to practice the language rules, which help to build learners' language skill and push them to choose correct vocabulary, sentence structure and tense to express the meaning of sentences in textbook.

There are four communicative tasks in Unit 4 and Unit 7 of PSIBE1, which are all creative activities and ask learners to produce output to make themselves be understood when they work in pairs to communicate with each other. For example, Task 11 in Unit 4 asks learners to make a complaint and Task 12 in Unit 4 asks learners to make a phone call to apologize for the inconvenience caused by a company (p27). Learners can create different roles within an outline and express their creative ideas within the frame. Through information negotiation, they know if they are understood or not from their partners' response, then they can adjust their oral output.

Into Business with English (IBE1)

The analysis of the tasks from the second book IBE1 (Appendix G is Unit 4; Unit 7 is in Appendix H) is described below.

How many opportunities for output are provided by IBE1?

Percentages of opportunities for output are calculated to gain an overall picture of the textbooks. There are 34 tasks in Unit 4 and 26 tasks in Unit 7, so together 60 tasks in these two units of IBE1. From the checklist analysis 10 tasks have no requirement for learner output. For example, Task 7 in Unit 4 is a reading task that offers input by asking learners to read the language reference box and prepare for tasks 8, 9 and 10. Task 33 in Unit 4 asks for graphic output by asking learners to draw symbols according to the description without language output. Together, 18% of the tasks do not require output. Such tasks are not focus of this study. However, most of the tasks (49 of 62 tasks, that is 82%) provide input while asking for different kinds of spoken or written output. They are the focus of this study and are discussed in detail.

What kinds of opportunities for output are provided in IBE1?

As with the first book, three aspects of tasks: 1) content; 2) participation; and 3) process, are analyzed with examples below following the checklist in Table 2.

Table 2

Opportunities for Output in Unit 4 and 7 of IBE1

Title: IBE1 (Unit 4 and Unit 7)			Publisher: UIBE Press	
Total Amount of Tasks: 60		Tasks with language output: 49		
1. CONTENT	A. Form: Expected Output	Graphic (picture, illustration, photograph and diagram)		4
		Oral words/phrases/sentences		7 + 3?
		Oral extended discourse		24
		Written words/ phrases/ sentences		20 + 3?
		Written extended discourse		5
	B. Source	Materials		28 m+14 m/l
		Learners		7 l+14 m/l
	C. Nature of Content	Personal information/opinion		10
		Fiction		32
		Non—fiction		7
		Linguistic items		7
		Metalinguistic comment		2
2. PARTICIPATION		Learners individually simultaneously		21
		Learners in pairs / One-to-one spoken interaction		24
		Learners in groups / Multi-person spoken interaction		4
		Learners to class / Spoken monologue		0
3. PROCESS	A. Discourse Control Level	Initiate		11
		Respond		38
	B. Focus	Language system (rules, patterns, items or forms)		11
		Meaning		23
		Meaning/system relationship (Both meaning and form)		15
	C. Mental Operation	Repeat identically / repeat selectively		16
		Repeat with substitution		1
		Review own foreign language output		2
		Formulate/hypothesize language rule		1
		Repeat with transformation		0
		Repeat with expansion		3
		Apply stated language rule		5
		Formulate items into large unit		1
		Hypothesize explanation/description/meaning of something		2
		Decode semantic/propositional meaning		2
		Select information		20
		Categorize selected information		6
		Translate from L1 to L2		0
		Translate from L2 to L1		0
		Negotiate to accomplish communicative task		24

Note: tasks marked with "?" have ambiguous directions for oral or written output.

Content. Contents that learners focus on have been analyzed as 1) form of expected output; 2) source; and 3) nature of content.

A. Form of expected output: Seven tasks clearly ask for oral words/phrases/ sentences (for example pronunciation tasks requiring repetition of words or sentences), while 20 tasks ask for written words/phrases/sentences, for instance, Task 5 of Unit 4 asks learners to write some sentences about company structure. Task 13 in Unit 4 asks for both written words/phrases/sentences and graphic by marking items in a plan and writing their names. Tasks 8, 9 and 11 in Unit 4 are grammar exercises and pre-listening exercises, which could involve either oral or written words/phrases/sentences. Altogether 24 tasks in two units require oral extended discourse from learners. For example, Task 2 in Unit 4 is a role-play exercise, learners are visitors and receptionists who asking for and giving directions. Written extended discourse is asked for in five tasks, one task for example involving writing a description of a place. Three tasks ask learners to give graphic output with oral extended discourse. For example, Task 3 in Unit 4 asks learners to draw plans of their campus and practice how to give directions. One task, Task 13 in Unit 4 asks for graphic output with written words/phrases/sentences.

B. Source: There are 14 tasks asking for information both from material and learners. For example, Task 2 in Unit 4 is a role-play task in which learners follow the language patterns offered by material, while they make up a plan of a company office. There are 28 tasks with the source of content being found only in the material. For example, Task 2 in Unit 7 is a question-answer task about reading material. Task 10 in Unit 4 asks for sentences about an office scene shown in the textbook. There are only 7 tasks requiring only information from learners. For example, Task 3 in Unit 4

asks for a plan of the learners' campus. The learners choose between their bedroom and classroom in order to write a short description in Task 16 of Unit 4.

C. Nature of content: There are 3 tasks in these two units asking for learners' personal information and 7 tasks asking for their opinions. There are 32 fictional tasks in two units of IBE1. For example, in tasks 8 and 9 of Unit 7, learners make up their own "train timetable" for Beijing Railway Station. Seven tasks involve non-fictional content. For example, in Task 11 of Unit 4 learners need to describe the use of items such as chair, computer, photocopier, conference table, telephone etc. The content of seven tasks is considered to be linguistic items. For instance, Task 8 in Unit 4 asks learners to produce sentences by following example sentences. Further examples, Task 18 in Unit 4 and Task 10 in Unit 7 are vocabulary lists. Two tasks involve comment on language use, structure or form. For example, Task 23 in Unit 4 asks for comments on spelling, grammar and punctuation. Task 3 in Unit 7 asks learners to think about the verb tenses used for talking about planning and arrangement, and to compare and comment on the difference of verb tenses.

Participation. Learners complete 24 tasks in pairs with two-way information flow through discussions, role-plays, filling information gaps, solving problems and making surveys. Four tasks involve group work with two-way information flow. For instance, in Task 19 of Unit 4, learners work in groups to make a product description.

In 21 tasks, the learners work individually without interaction with other learners. For example, Task 28 in Unit 4 asks learners to fill in blanks with suitable words to complete a notice from the textbook by themselves.

There is no task asking learners to face the class, such as spoken monologues before the class in these units of IBE1.

Processes. The processes through which are learners to go have been analyzed as 1) level of discourse control; 2) focus; and 3) metal operation.

A. Level of discourse control. There are 11 tasks giving learners freedom to express what they want to say without any kind of script. For example, in Task 10 of Unit 4, learners look at a picture and make sentences about it. They can choose any information they want to express and use any language form that they like. However, most of the tasks (38 tasks) just allow learners express themselves through language that has been narrowly defined. For example, Task 8 in Unit 4 is an exercise which asks learners to combine the sentences by using the relative pronoun "where" (p47).

B. Focus. Nearly half of the opportunities for output (in 23 tasks) focus on meaning only. For example, Task 14 in Unit 4 asks learners to work in pairs to spot ten differences in two pictures and list them without considering language form. Another 15 tasks consider both meaning and language use. For example, Task 19 in Unit 4 asks learners to write descriptions of four company's products in the pictures by following the example of the book and also asks learners to make their descriptions sound interesting. The amount of tasks that focus on language (11) in two units of IBE1 is less than two kinds above. For example, Task 3 in Unit 7 is a grammar exercise. Task 10 in Unit 7 is an exercise that categorizes vocabulary into three descriptive headings.

C. Mental operation. Tasks concerning language rules such as repeating language items, hypothesizing or applying stated language rules help learners to build their language skill. There are 16 tasks offering learners opportunities to repeat either identically or selectively. For example, Task 1 in Unit 4 asks learners to select information from what they have heard in a conversation of giving directions, then

repeat the names of places. Task 33 in Unit 4 and tasks 23, 24, 25 in Unit 7 ask

learners to reproduce exactly what is presented in pronunciation exercises.

Task 25 in Unit 4 asks learners to review their writing of a fire notice through

comparing with other learners and making changes. Task 20 of Unit 7 also gives

learners chances to review their own language output. Tasks 5, 15 and 19 in Unit 4

give learners an outline as a frame to produce further language, considered as

repetition with expansion. In tasks 2, 8, 9 of Unit 4 and tasks 11, 24 of Unit 7, learners

use a given language rule in order to transform or produce language. And Task 8 in

Unit 4 gives learners a chance to formulate items into a larger unit by asking them to

combine the sentences through use of the relative pronoun "where". Tasks 31 and 34

in Unit 4 ask learners to hypothesize meaning of symbols and signs, which is

considered as hypothesizing the meaning of something.

In Task 17 of Unit 4 and Task16 of Unit 7, learners decode the surface

meaning of given reading texts in comprehensive reading tasks. For instance, in Task

16 of Unit 7, learners need to read messages for a manager and decode the meaning to

complete this manager's desk diary for a day. Learners need to select information in

20 tasks and categorize selected information in 6 tasks of IBE1. For example, Task 24

in Unit 4 asks learners to read a notice of fire drill to find out unnecessary repetition.

Then they need to rewrite this notice and reorganize the necessary information.

Nearly half of the opportunities of output (24 tasks from 49) involve a

communicative purpose. Negotiation of meaning in these tasks pushes learners to

offer comprehensible output. These tasks are designed with variety. For example,

learners act as visitors and receptionists in Task 2 of Unit 4. They are clerks at the

Information Office of Beijing Railway Station and tourists in tasks 8 and 9 of Unit 7.

In Task 10 of Unit 4, learners have a picture of office scene as a source to produce

descriptive sentence. They spot 10 differences between two office scenes in Task 14 of Unit 4. Tasks 26, 29 and 32 of Unit 4 offer notices, symbols and public signs from real world to learners to discuss about where they see these and the meaning of them.

Skills for Business English (SBE2)

The checklist is used to analyze the tasks from the third book SBE2 (Unit 4 is in Appendix I and Unit 7 is in Appendix J).

How many opportunities for output are provided by SBE2?

Percentages of opportunities of output are calculated to gain an overall picture of the textbook. There are 14 tasks in each unit, totaling 28 tasks in two units of SBE2. From the checklist analysis, most tasks (57%) provide input rather than ask for output from learners. The other 12 tasks (43%) offer learners different opportunities for output that are discussed in detail below.

What kinds of opportunities of output are provided in SBE2?

As with the first book, three aspects of tasks with examples are analyzed below, namely: 1) content that the learners are to focus on; 2) participation; and 3) the process through which learners are to go, following the checklist in Table 3.

Table 3

Opportunities for Output in Unit 4 and 7 of SBE2

Title: SBE2 (Unit 4 and Unit 7)			Publisher: Fudan University Press	
Total Amount of Tasks: 28			Tasks with language output:12	
1. CONTENT	A. Form: Expected Output	Graphic (picture, illustration, photograph and diagram)		0
		Oral words/phrases/sentences		0
		Oral extended discourse		5
		Written words/ phrases/ sentences		5
		Written extended discourse		2
	B. Source	Materials		10m+2m/l
		Learners		2m/l
	C. Nature of Content	Personal information/opinion		0
		Fiction		8
		Non--fiction		0
		Linguistic items		4
		Metalinguistic comment		0
2. PARTICIPATION		Learners individually simultaneously		7
		Learners in pairs / One-to-one spoken interaction		5
		Learners in groups / Multi-person spoken interaction		0
		Learners to class / Spoken monologue		0
3.PROCESS	A. Level of Discourse Control	Initiate		0
		Respond		12
	B. Focus	Language system (rules, patterns, items or forms)		3
		Meaning		5
		Meaning/system relationship (Both meaning and form)		4
	C. Mental Operation	Repeat identically / repeat selectively		2
		Repeat with substitution		0
		Review own foreign language output		0
		Formulate/hypothesize language rule		0
		Repeat with transformation		0
		Repeat with expansion		7
		Apply stated language rule		1
		Formulate items into large unit		0
		Hypothesize explanation/description/meaning of something		0
		Decode semantic/propositional meaning		1
		Select information		8
		Categorize selected information		0
		Translate from L1 to L2		0
		Translate from L2 to L1		0
		Negotiate to accomplish communicative task		5

Content. Contents that learners are deal with have been analyzed as 1) form of expected output; 2) source; 3) nature of content.

A. Form of expected output. There are five tasks offering opportunities for output of written words/phrases/sentences (for example, learners fill in blanks in Task 1 of Unit 7). In Task 4 in both units, learners produce written extended discourse. In five tasks learners are expected to produce oral extended discourse (for example, Task 8 in Unit 4 is a role-play task in pairs).

B. Source. Task 4 in both units asks for information from both material and learners to accomplish writing tasks. There are 10 tasks requiring information for output only from material. No task asks for information from learners only.

C. Nature of content. No task involves learners' personal information/opinion, non-fictional texts or metalinguistic comment. Most of the tasks in these two units ask for fictional texts. For example, Task 4 of Unit 4 ask learners to write a letter to the head of an imaginary company to introduce themselves and express their desire to have cooperation with this company. There are four tasks where the nature of the contents is linguistic items, such as definitions of the words and spellings of the words.

Participation. In most of tasks (7 of 12 tasks) learners fill in blanks, answer questions and write e-mails individually without any interaction with other learners. They complete 5 role-play tasks in pairs with partners involving a two-way information flow. No task asks the learners to work in groups with multi-person interactions or interact with the class as a whole.

Processes. The processes through which learners are to go have been analyzed as 1) level of discourse control; 2) focus; and 3) mental operation.

A. Level of discourse control. All 12 tasks with opportunities for output expect the learners to express themselves through language that has been narrowly defined. They need to produce their output within some kinds of script. For instance, all 5 role-play tasks give learners the notes, questions, and answers to follow. No task gives the learners freedom to express what they wish to say without any kind of script.

B. Focus. Nearly half opportunities for output (5 tasks from 12) focus on meaning only. For instance, two role-play tasks in Unit 4 give learners an outline of meaning to follow. Three vocabulary activities (tasks 3, 10 in Unit 4 and Task 1 in Unit 7) focus on the language system only, such as spelling and correct using of words. There are four tasks that focus on both meaning and language form. For example, Task 2 in Unit 4 is a gap-filling task with different forms of words. Learners need to choose one correct answer from, for example: "a) increase; b) increases; c) increased; d) increasing" (p35).

C. Mental operation. Tasks focussing on language rules such as repeating language items can help learners to build language skills. For example, learners make selections and repeat language items in Task 2 of Unit 4, a multiple-choice task.

Learners repeat with expansion in seven tasks, by following an outline as a frame to produce language. Task 1 in Unit 7 gives learners chance to apply a language rule by answering grammar questions, such as "the past tense of this verb is__"(p64).

In three tasks learners need to select information from materials, for example Task 7 in Unit 4 asks them to select information from reading materials. In another 5 tasks, they select information from both materials and the speech of their partners. However, they are not asked to categorize selected information in any task.

Task 7 in Unit 4 also gives learners opportunity to decode semantic meaning after reading four job position description.

Tasks 8, 9 in Unit 4 and tasks 6, 7, 8 in Unit 7 are five role-play tasks that have communicative purpose in SBE2. Negotiation of the meaning in communicative tasks pushes learners to offer comprehensible output.

First Insights into Business (FIB1)

The checklist is used to analyze the tasks from the fourth book FIB1 (Unit 4 is in Appendix K and Appendix L is for Unit 7).

How many opportunities for output are provided by FIB1?

Percentages of opportunities of output are calculated to gain an overall picture of the textbooks. There are 38 tasks in Unit 4 and 53 tasks in Unit 7, so together 91 tasks in these two units of FIB1. From the checklist analysis, most of the tasks (64 from 91 tasks, 70%) provide input while asking for different kinds of oral or written output from learners. They are the objects of the study and are discussed further.

What kinds of opportunities for output are provided in FIB1?

As before, three aspects of tasks with examples are analyzed in detail below, namely: 1) content that the learners are to focus on; 2) participation; and 3) the process through which learners are to go, following the checklist in Table 4.

Table 4

Opportunities for Output in Unit 4 and 7 of FIB1

Title: FIB1 (Unit 4 and 7)		Publisher: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press	
Total Amount of Tasks: 91		Tasks with language output: 64	
.1. CONTENT	A. Form: Expected Output	Graphic (picture, illustration, photograph and diagram)	0
		Oral words/phrases/sentences	4 + 13?
		Oral extended discourse	21 + 3?
		Written words/ phrases/ sentences	31 + 13?
		Written extended discourse	4?
	B. Source	Materials	36m+17m/l
		Learners	11l+17m/l
	C. Nature of Content	Personal information/opinion	20opinion
		Fiction	29
		Non--fiction	9
		Linguistic items	14
		Metalinguistic comment	4
2. PARTICIPATION		Learners individually simultaneously	42
		Learners in pairs / One-to-one spoken interaction	20
		Learners in groups / Multi-person spoken interaction	2
		Learners to class / Spoken monologue	0
3. PROCESS	A. Level of Discourse Control	Initiate	26
		Respond	38
	B. Focus	Language system (rules, patterns, items or forms)	20
		Meaning	36
		Meaning/system relationship (Both meaning and form)	8
	C. Mental Operation	Repeat identically / repeat selectively	21
		Repeat with substitution	0
		Review own foreign language output	0
		Formulate/hypothesize language rule	3
		Repeat with transformation	0
		Repeat with expansion	2
		Apply stated language rule	7
		Formulate items into large unit	2
		Hypothesize explanation/description/meaning of something	1
		Decode semantic/propositional meaning	3
		Select information	18
		Categorize selected information	6
		Translate from L1 to L2	0
		Translate from L2 to L1	0
		Negotiate to accomplish communicative task	20

Note: tasks marked with "?" have ambiguous directions for oral or written output.

Content. The contents that learners are to deal with have been analyzed from 1) form of expected output; 2) source; 3) nature of content.

A. Form of expected output. Oral words/phrases/sentences, oral extended discourse and written words/phrases/sentences are required in tasks in these units of FIB1. Four tasks are clear in the instructions for oral words/phrases/sentences output. For example, in Task 10 of Unit 4, learners listen to some sentences and repeat them.

Altogether 21 tasks clearly require oral extended discourse. For example, Task 4 in Unit 7 is a discussion task that asks learners to work in pairs and discuss the features of three products and the potential customers of these products.

There are 31 tasks clearly asking for written words/phrases/sentences, for instance, Task 6 in Unit 7 asks learners to look at a picture of a leather briefcase and write down the names of the different parts of it. In eight tasks, learners offer written words/phrases/sentences with oral extended discourse at the same time.

In 13 tasks, output can be either oral or written words/phrases/sentences. For example, Task 5 in Unit 7 ask learners, "which of the products would you like to own and why?" (p72). Learners can answer this question either in written or oral form.

Three tasks can be either oral or written extended discourse. For example, Learners can compare two companies in Task 51 of Unit 7 in either written or oral.

One task has oral extended discourse with ambiguous directions for written extended discourse. Task 16 in Unit 4 asks the learners to, "work in pairs and do a SWOT analysis for Ford" (p43). Learners discuss with their partners in oral extended discourse. At the same time they can choose to write down their analysis or not. It is not very clear from the direction of the textbook.

B. Source. There are 17 tasks asking for information both from material and

learners. For example, Task 13 in Unit 7 is, "Work in pairs. Choose three of the products from the photographs below and write down three adjectives to describe each one. Use adjectives from the box and any others you can think of" (p74).

Only 11 tasks ask for information solely from learners. For example, Task 48 in Unit 7 asks the learners to think about a product they would like to buy. Then they need to talk about the potential customers and the features of this product.

There are 36 tasks using information only from the material. For instance, Task 7 in Unit 4 is a task where learners need to listen and fill the blanks with what they heard from the tapes. They get information from the material.

C. Nature of content. There are 20 tasks in these two units asking for learners' opinion in output. For instance, Task 16 in Unit 7 asks, "Who is the target customer for this product in your opinion?" (p75).

Altogether there are 29 tasks in these two units with fictional content. Tasks 13, 28, 29, 31 in Unit 4 and tasks 4, 43, 48, 52, 53 in Unit 7 ask fictional texts at the same time with learners' personal opinion. For example, Task 43 in Unit 7 is, "Listen again. What benefit does the salesperson emphasise? Who is the target customer, in your opinion?" (p82). In this task, learners listen to the tape of a fictional advertisement of a product. At the same time, they need to offer their own opinion.

Tasks 13, 16, 20, 40 and 51 in Unit 7 offer non-fictional information with learners' personal opinion. Another four tasks ask for only non-fictional texts. The nature of the content in 14 tasks is linguistic items. For example, Task 10 in Unit 4 is a task practicing intonation. Task 11 in Unit 7 requires categrization of vocabulary. Altogether four tasks require comment on language use, structure or form. For example, Task 30 of Unit 7 makes comments on grammar rules of comparative and superlative adjectives.

Participation. Learners discuss, fill information gaps, solve problems, and make surveys in pairs in 20 tasks with two-way information flow. Learners work in groups in two tasks in Unit 7 that offer them opportunities of multi-person interaction. In Task 45, they read information about a product and complete a summary in groups. In Task 46, they prepare a sales presentation in groups that requires group interaction.

In 42 tasks, learners work individually without any interaction with other learners. No task asks the learners to interact with the class as a whole.

Process. The processes learners are to go through have been analyzed in terms of 1) level of discourse control; 2) focus; and 3) metal operation.

A. Level of discourse control. There are 26 tasks giving learners freedom to express what they want to say without any kind of script. For example, in Task 5 of Unit 4, learners compare their analysis of a company with their partners; find differences and the reasons for differences. They can choose the differences they want to talk and use any language forms. However, most of the tasks (38 tasks) expect the learners to express themselves through language that has been narrowly defined. For example, Task 8 in Unit 4 is an exercise about verbs, negative forms of verbs and how to use them.

B. Focus. More than half of the opportunities for output (36 tasks) focus on meaning only. For example, Task 14 in Unit 4 asks learners read the first paragraph of an article and find out the points the writer makes. They just need to spot the points without specifically considering the language system.

There are 20 tasks focussing on language system only. For example, Task 10 in Unit 7 is an exercise that categorizes vocabulary into different descriptive headings.

The amount of tasks which focus on both meaning and language form is less than above two kinds. There are only eight such tasks in these two units of FIB1. For example, Task 32 in Unit 4 asks learners "Read your partner's recommendations. Write some comments about the ideas, the grammar and the spelling" (p46).

C. Mental operation. There are 21 tasks offering opportunities to repeat either identically or selectively. For example, Task 25 in Unit 7 asks learners to read a text to select words and repeat words to complete the table. In three tasks, the learners need to hypothesize/ formulate a language rule. For example, Task 30 in Unit 7 asks the learners to answer questions such as the rules of comparative and superlative adjectives. Task 19 in Unit 4 asks the learners to choose five words from the previous task and write five sentences by using each of the words. Thus in this task, learners repeat words with expansion into sentences.

There are seven tasks considered to involve applying a stated language rule. For example, Task 35 in Unit 7 asks the learners to write five sentences of comparison by following the example pattern of comparative sentences. In Task 22 of Unit 4 and Task 28 of Unit 7, learners need to formulate items into larger units combining the sentences by using the linking words "so that", "because" or "therefore".

In Task 14 of Unit 4 and tasks 21, 45 of Unit 7, learners decode the surface meaning of given reading texts in comprehensive reading tasks. Learners need to select information in 18 tasks and categorize information in six tasks. Task 34 in Unit 4 asks learners to hypothesize meaning of a term - troubleshooting.

About one third (20 tasks) of the 64 tasks requiring output have various communicative purposes. These tasks are in various ways to push learners to produce language output. Learners act as colleagues to discuss some suggestions in some business situations in a meeting in Task 33 of Unit 4. In Task 4 in Unit 7, learners

negotiate the feature of products and potential customers of products. Task 20 in Unit

7 asks learners to discuss and answer some questions. Task 35 asks the learners to

make agreement about some comparative sentences. In Task 13 in Unit 4, the learners

need to identify differences and similarities between themselves and their partners in

terms of how they deal with problems. Task 23 in Unit 4 and Task 15 in Unit 7 ask

learners to discuss the information using clauses of purpose and the correct order of

descriptive adjectives.

Summary of the Section

Above is an analysis of four textbooks with checklist from three aspects: 1)

content that the learners are to focus on; 2) participation; and 3) the process through

which learners are to go. The four textbooks have different features in content,

participation and process. The following section is an evaluation of the results of

analysis.

Evaluation Using the In-Depth Method

The in-depth method was used to put a value on the results from the checklist

analysis of all tasks requiring output in Unit 4 and Unit 7 in four selected Business

English textbooks, following the summary of checklist analysis result in Table 5.

Table 5

Opportunities for Output in Four Business English Textbooks

Unit Number: Unit 4 and Unit 7		Title:	PSIBE1	IBE1	SBE2	FIB1
Total Amount of Tasks (Tasks with language output):			36(10)	60(49)	28(12)	91(64)
Percentage of tasks requiring language output among whole tasks			28%	82%	43%	70%
1. CONTENT	A. Form: Expected Output	Graphic (picture, illustration, photograph and diagram)	0	4	0	0
		Oral words/phrases/sentences	2?	7 + 3?	0	4 + 13?
		Oral extended discourse	4	24	5	21 + 3?
		Written words/ phrases/ sentences	4 + 2?	20 + 3?	5	31 + 13?
		Written extended discourse	0	5	2	3? + 1??
	B. Source	Materials	8	42	12	53
		Learners	4	21	2	28
	C. Nature of Content	Personal information/opinion	1	10	0	20
		Fiction	9	32	8	29
		Non--fiction	0	7	0	9
		Linguistic items	0	7	4	14
		Metalinguistic comment	0	2	0	4
2. PARTICIPATION		Learners individually simultaneously	6	21	7	42
		Learners in pairs / One-to-one spoken interaction	4	24	5	20
		Learners in groups / Multi-person spoken interaction	0	4	0	2
		Learners to class / Spoken monologue	0	0	0	0
3. PROCESS	A. Discourse Control Level	Initiate	2	11	0	26
		Respond	8	38	12	38
	B. Focus	Language system (rules, patterns, items or forms)	2	11	3	20
		Meaning	4	23	5	36
		Meaning/system relationship (Both meaning and form)	4	15	4	8
	C. Mental Operation	Repeat identically / repeat selectively	2	16	2	21
		Repeat with substitution	0	1	0	0
		Review own foreign language output	0	2	0	0
		Formulate/hypothesize language rule	0	1	0	3
		Repeat with transformation	0	0	0	0
		Repeat with expansion	2	3	7	2
		Apply stated language rule	0	5	1	7
		Formulate items into large unit	0	1	0	2
		Hypothesize explanation/description/meaning of something	0	2	0	1
		Decode semantic/propositional meaning	1	2	1	3
		Select information	4	20	8	18
		Categorize selected information	0	6	0	6
		Translate from L1 to L2	2	0	0	0
		Translate from L2 to L1	1	0	0	0
		Negotiate to accomplish communicative task	4	24	5	20

Note 1: Tasks marked with "?" have ambiguous directions for either oral or written output.
Note 2: Tasks marked with "??" have ambiguous directions for oral or written or both oral/written output.

Practical Skills Improvement in Business English (PSIBE1)

Most tasks in two units of PSIBE1 provide learners language input. Only 28%

tasks among all tasks in Unit 4 and 7 offer learners opportunities for output. Thus the

number of opportunities for output in PSIBE1 is small.

PSIBE1 clearly offers tasks requiring output of oral extended discourse and

written words/phrases/sentences with similar frequency. Written words/phrases/

sentences tasks have to be completed all by learners individually with fictional

information from the material. Translation tasks are a feature of PSIBE1. In

translation tasks, the focus is on the language system. In other two written

words/phrases/sentences tasks, learners focus on both meaning and language form.

These tasks do not involve any interaction between learners, but they do practice

language forms, grammar items and using language rules in these tasks, which help

them to build language skills.

Four oral extended discourse tasks have to be completed in pairs. Two of them

have outlines to follow, and learners make up some fictional information with

language that has been narrowly defined. They focus on both meaning and language

form. These two tasks give learners opportunities of producing language and

receiving indirect feedback.

One other oral extended discourse task also works with fictional information,

but learners have more freedom to express themselves without any kind of language

script. They focus on meaning. Another oral extended discourse task asks learners to

express their own opinion without considering language form. These tasks ask for

negotiation between learners with two-way information flow to accomplish

communicative purposes. Learners have opportunities to produce target language. Learners are not asked to give direct comments on each other's language output but can gain indirect feedback from partners' responses when they communicate. They know if their output is understandable by observing their partners' responses. They have chance to notice errors in their output and correct their linguistic output. These kinds of opportunities for output contribute to learners' communicative abilities.

No written extended discourse is required in the tasks analyzed in PSIBE1. No task asks for linguistic items or metalinguistic comments. And no non-fictional texts offered by material. Learners work mostly on fictional information and, less frequently, with personal opinion. This may result in a less "pushed" language as learners can simplify language by using easier imaginary situations, easier words, phrases and sentences when working with fictional content.

In the analyzed units of PSIBE1, learners have no opportunity to work in groups, or to address the whole class, such as through monologue. They work individually and simultaneously in most of the tasks without information flow with others. Most of the tasks expect learners to express themselves through language that has been narrowly defined. The mental operations in tasks in PSIBE1 are most frequently repetition of language after selection, decoding semantic meaning and selecting information.

By way of concluding, PSIBE1 offers a small amount of opportunities for output that may limit language learning. Most tasks limit learners' language through narrowly defined frames. Few tasks give them freedom to express themselves in any language they wish to use. Most of the time, learners work individually without interaction with others, although they have two-way information flow in oral discourse output. In some tasks, learners focus on language form and meaning, other

tasks give learners chance to consider meaning only or form only. Tasks are limited in terms of mental operation, and most of the tasks deal with fictional content.

Therefore, according to the research concerning output in Chapter 2 opportunities for output in PSIBE1 may not push learners to produce high quality output. The opportunities for output are limited in quantity and variety. The content of the opportunities for output is limited too, and learners have the chance to reduce the language difficulty in imaginary situations. Learners are restricted to material without much freedom of producing language that they wish to express. The tasks in PSIBE1 work on building language skills more than on producing target language.

Into Business with English (IBE1)

Most of the tasks in IBE1 (82%) have opportunities for output. Therefore the quantity of opportunities for output in IBE1 is large. All five different kinds of output can be found in IBE1, graphic output and four kinds of language output – written words/phrases/sentences, written extended discourse, oral words/phrases/sentences, and oral extended discourse.

Most written words/phrases/sentences tasks in IBE1 use fictional content from material with learners' individual work on narrowly defined language. Some of them focus on both meaning and language; others focus on either language or meaning. Some of them allow practice of language patterns; others allow learners to try out their target language.

Some tasks require written words/phrases/sentences and oral extended discourse in pair work or group work. Some tasks ask learners to discuss questions about language use; others ask learners to negotiate to accomplish communicative

tasks, writing down their answer to the questions or their solution to the problems. Some tasks focus on both meaning and language form, other tasks focus on either meaning or language form only. These tasks help learners to build language skills meanwhile pushing them to improve communicative ability.

Written extended discourse tasks are done either with fictional content from material or personal information from learners. Some written extended discourse tasks are done individually which lets learners try out target language expressions alone; others are done together with oral output in either groups or in pairs, in which learners negotiate for a communicative purpose. Most written extended discourse tasks require narrowly defined language. Just a few give learners freedom to use any language they wish to use without any kind of script. All written extended discourse tasks focus on both meaning and language system.

Most oral words/phrases/sentences tasks in IBE1 deal with linguistic items from material, with learners working in pairs with repetition of language. One oral words/phrases/sentences task in IBE1 involves metalinguistic comment with learners' individually hypothesizing a language rule. The oral words/phrases/sentences tasks in IBE1 help learners build their language skills. Learners pay attention to the language system when they repeat words/phrases/sentences.

Nearly half opportunities for output in IBE1 are tasks asking for negotiation to accomplish communicative purposes involving a two-way information flow. Over half of all communicative tasks have limitation of language use that asks learners to produce output within narrowly defined frames, less than half give learners freedom to express themselves without any kind of language script. Learners accomplish most communicative tasks in pair work with a few completed in groups. Nearly half of communicative tasks focus on both meaning and language form. Another half of

communicative tasks focus on meaning only. Learners are not asked to give direct comments on each other's language output but may gain from indirect feedback. If their partners' response indicates misunderstanding they have chance to notice this and correct their linguistic output.

Various mental operations are involved in tasks in IBE1, such as repeating identically/selectively, repeating with substitution, repeating with expansion, reviewing own foreign language output, applying stated language rule, hypothesizing explanation/description/meaning of something, formulating items into large unit, selecting information, decoding semantic/prepositional meaning and categorizing selected information. Some mental operations in tasks show the emphasis of these tasks. For example, when tasks involve formulating items into large units, applying language rules, repeating language items and hypothesizing language rules, they focus on the language system which helps learners to build their language skills.

By way of concluding, IBE1 offers a large amount of opportunities for output which is helpful for language learning. Among the opportunities for output, learners have the chance to both write and speak. They have opportunities for both extended discourse and output of words/phrases/sentences. Some tasks focus on building their language skills; others help with their communicative abilities.

The nature of the content in the tasks in IBE1 is various, including learners' personal information or opinion, fiction and non-fiction from learners or material, and linguistic items and metalinguistic comment. Tasks asking for personal information and non-fictional texts may demand higher quality output from learners than personal opinion or fictional texts, as they may need to try harder to express what actually exists. Linguistic items and metalinguistic comment focus on language practice more which helps to build learners' language skills.

Learners work individually in some tasks in IBE1; they also work in pairs and in groups in other tasks with two-way information flow. Learners have opportunities to express what they wish to say freely in some tasks; in other tasks, they have limitation of language use.

Therefore IBE1 offers a large quantity and variety in different kinds of opportunities for output. These opportunities for output in IBE1 help learners to build their language skills as well as improve their communicative abilities. Both are useful, helpful and important in learners' language learning according to literature review of the roles of output given in chapter two.

Skills for Business English (SBE2)

Less than half of the tasks (43%) in the two units of SBE2 analyzed have opportunities for output. In these tasks, only three kinds of language output can be seen in SBE2, with no output of oral words/phrases/sentences.

Most written words/phrases/sentences tasks in SBE2 involve linguistic items from material with learners working individually following narrowly defined language frames. Tasks focus either on both meaning and form or language form only. These tasks are to help to build learners' language skills. One written words/phrases/sentences task uses fictional texts from material with learners' individually focusing on meaning and following narrowly defined language. This task asks for meaning decoding and selecting to check comprehension.

Two written extended discourse tasks use fictional texts from both material and learners with learners' individual work focusing on both meaning and language form. Language is narrowed by the material, with learners' repeating with expansion.

This kind of practice output helps build learners' language skills.

Oral extended discourse tasks use fictional texts from material with narrowly defined language frames focusing on meaning only. Learners repeat with expansion. All communicative purposes are limited by the material and so do not give learners freedom to express what they wish to say. Communication is controlled by material.

By way of concluding, tasks in SBE2 offer a limited number of opportunities for output. And opportunities for output in SBE2 mostly focus on language skill building. Even tasks with communicative purpose are narrowly controlled by the material. No task gives the learners more freedom to express what they wish to say without any kind of script. Learners practice language items, and rules instead of being pushed to produce and use target language. No task asks for non-fictional texts or learners' personal information or opinions. In most tasks, learners make up something from their imagination which gives them chance to lower the difficulty of language output.

First Insights into Business (FIB1)

Most of the tasks (70%) in FIB1 require output. Oral words/phrases/sentences tasks have to be completed by learners individually with fictional texts or linguistic items offered by material, or with learners' personal opinion. Some tasks give learners freedom to express whatever they want to say; others limit learners' output narrowly. Some tasks focus on both meaning and language form, others focus on either meaning or language form.

Tasks requiring output of written words/phrases/sentences are the biggest group of tasks in FIB1. Similar to oral words/phrases/sentences tasks, they involve

material, learners or both as the source of content. Personal information or opinion, fiction, non-fiction, linguistic items and metalinguistic comment feature are the nature of content for these tasks. Learners work individually simultaneously, in pairs and in groups for these tasks. Some tasks give learners freedom to express whatever they want to say; others limit learner output narrowly. Some tasks focus on both meaning and language form, others focus on either meaning or language form.

Oral extended discourse tasks are the second biggest amount of tasks in FIB1 All oral extended discourse tasks have to be completed in pairs with various nature of content, such as fictional texts from material, fictional texts from material and learners' personal opinion, non-fictional texts from material and learners' personal opinion, non-fictional texts from material, and learners' personal opinion only. Most oral extended tasks focus on meaning in FIB1. A few focus on both meaning and form, and one of them focuses on language form only. All oral extended discourse tasks involve two-way information flow between learners, with negotiation helping learners to improve their communicative abilities.

Various mental operations are involved in tasks in IBE1, such as repetition, applying language rules, hypothesizing, formulating items into larger units, selecting information, decoding meaning and categorizing selected information. Some mental operations in tasks show very clearly the emphasis of these tasks. For example, applying stated language rules, and hypothesizing language rules, focus on the language system which help learners to build their language skills.

By way of concluding, FIB1 offers a large amount of opportunities for output, including both written and oral output, with opportunities for extended discourse or words/phrases/sentences output. Some of tasks are focus on building their language skills; others are helping with their communicative abilities. Learners work

individually in some tasks in IBE1; they also work in pairs and in groups in other tasks with two-way information flow. In some tasks learners have opportunities to express what they wish to say freely. There is variety in the nature of content in tasks in FIB1. Tasks asking for personal information and non-fictional texts may elicit higher quality output from learners than personal opinion or fictional texts.

Thus FIB1 offers large quantity with variety of opportunities for output. The various opportunities for output in FIB1 help learners to build their language skills as well as improve their communicative abilities. Both are important in language learning according to the review of the roles of output in chapter two.

Some Same Features of Four Textbooks

Four BE textbooks are all lack of tasks which give learners opportunities to speak monologue to whole class, perhaps due to the designers' consideration about the big class size in China, in which is not easy to have enough time for every student to speak monologue to whole class.

Another common feature of four textbooks is lacking of "repeat with transformation" tasks which ask learners to apply a conscious or unconscious rule to given language and to transform it accordingly, such as change statements into questions. It is a good type of activity, which helps learners to make some changing to the language rules, items and forms that they learned. These changes contribute to build their language skills, also make learners think about how to use these language items. However, all four textbooks have not this type of task.