CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This chapter includes the finding of the present study, a comparison of opportunities for output in four books, limitations of the study, implications for teaching and learning, and recommendations for further study.

Comparison of Output Opportunities and Finding of This Study

There are opportunities for output offered by all the four selected textbooks, however the quantity and the quality vary from textbook to textbook, with two of them appearing to provide most output opportunities of top quality.

The Amount of Opportunities for Output in the Selected Textbooks

The study shows that IBE1 offers the highest percentage of opportunities for output in two sample units. FIB1 is the second one. SBE2 follows as the third one for the percentage of opportunities for output. PSIBE1 has the least opportunities for output among four textbooks. IBE1 may be attractive as it seems to provide the greatest quantity of opportunities for output. In contrast, a teacher using PSIBE 1 may

need to supplement the material with additional tasks requiring output.

According to the ranking by percentage of opportunities for output above, the two international textbooks hold the middle places, while the two local textbooks take the top and the bottom places respectively. As such, it is not possible to conclude that local or international textbooks are better simply by considering the different number of tasks included in each.

<u>Kinds of Opportunities for Output in the Selected Textbooks</u>

Both IBE1 and FIB1 have more types of opportunities for output than other two textbooks PSIBE1 and SBE2. Tasks in IBE1 and FIB1 ask learners to work individually, in pairs and in groups. The opportunities for working in pairs and in groups involve learners in two-way information flows and push learners to express themselves clearly and to be understood. They are therefore expected to contribute more to the learners' language development. IBE1 offers more opportunities for working in pairs and working in groups than FIB1 and the other two books. Tasks in PSIBE1 and SBE2 do not give learners opportunities to work in groups, instead, learners are just required to work individually and in pairs. None of the four textbooks offer opportunities for learners to speak to the whole class in a monologue.

Tasks in IBE1 and FIB1 give learners opportunities for not only output of oral and written words/phrases/sentences but also oral and written extended discourse. IBE1 offers more opportunities for oral extended discourse and written extended discourse

than the other three books. Oral extended discourse tasks in all four textbooks involve two-way information flow between learners and their partners, which require clear expression of meaning from learners. Generally speaking, this kind of task with communicative purpose may prompt learners to make themselves understood harder than other kinds of tasks, especially when they need to communicate about their personal information and non-fictional texts. And extended discourse tasks push harder than words/phrase/sentences tasks because learners need to make output more precise and coherent in extended discourse. Therefore, IBE1 seems to be the most attractive book.

Tasks in IBE1, FIB1 and PSIBE1 ask for information from material, learners and from both material and learners; SBE2 does not have any task asking for information only from learners. And there are fiction, non-fiction, linguistic items, metalinguistic comment and personal information or opinion involved in tasks in IBE1 and FIB1.Generally speaking, non-fictional texts and personal information may result in more pushed output because learners need to express real information that may be beyond their language ability. They cannot just simplify the issues to match their language ability. Only IBE1 asks for output that is authentic and may push language output hardest among all tasks. They cannot make up any easier imaginary situation to decrease language difficulty in this kind of task. IBE1, FIB1 and PSIBE1 ask learners' personal opinion which also may push learners to express themselves harder than fictional texts. PSIBE1 does not ask non-fictional texts, which means the degree of pushing output may be lower than with IBE1 and FIB1. SBE2 does not ask for any

personal information or opinions from learners or non-fictional texts, so may show the lowest level of pushed output among the four textbooks. Both PSIBE1 and SBE2 have no tasks requiring metalinguistic comment which help learners to think clearly about language use, form structure, or meaning by making comment on these items to build their language skills.

IBE1, FIB1 and PSIBE1 give learners freedom to express what they wish to say without any kind of script in some tasks, and for other tasks learners need to express through narrowly defined language. FIB1 offers the largest amount of tasks involving free expression without any kind of script among four textbooks, which allow learners try to the produce target language freely. SBE2 does not allow the learners to express themselves freely. They must follow some kinds of script through narrowly defined language. This limitation makes learners to practice what they have learned instead of using target language freely.

The four selected textbooks all give learners chances to focus on meaning, language system and both meaning and language system. In IBE1, SBE2 and FIB1 the majority of output tasks focus on meaning only. PSIBE1 has same amount of tasks focussing on meaning, and on both meaning and form. Comparing the four textbooks, FIB1 has the biggest amount of tasks that are meaning-focused only and forms-focused only. IBE1 has the largest amount of tasks focussing on both meaning and forms. Doughty & Williams (1998) conclude that teaching that is primarily meaning-focused could be improved with some degree of attention to language form. And Lightbown (1998) gives "affective, psycholinguistic, and pedagogical reasons for why it is

possible, and sometimes preferable, to integrate focus on form and meaning in the same activity"(p10). Therefore, three kinds of tasks all are necessary for learners' language learning, with focusing on both meaning and form in the same tasks as preferable.

Tasks in IBE1 and FIB1 involve more mental operations than another two books. IBE1 involves the most types of mental operations, with FIB1 second. PSIBE1 is similar with SBE2, with just a little bit more kinds than SBE2 in mental operations. The diverse mental operations in tasks may help maintain the learners' interest in tasks. From this point of view, IBE1 and FIB1 can be considered better than either PSIBE1 or SBE2.

As regards tasks with communicative purpose, in IBE1 nearly half of the tasks are communicative requiring output, the most among the four textbooks. More than half of the communicative tasks involve fictional content; while other tasks ask for learners' personal opinion about fictional texts, and some tasks ask for learners' personal opinion of non-fictional texts. FIB1 has one-third communicative tasks. Most of communicative tasks (11 tasks among 20 tasks) ask for fictional texts in FIB1 too. In PSIBE1, learners have fictional role-play tasks; with two complaining and apologizing in imaginary situations; while one task asks about learners' personal opinion. Only role-plays appear as communicative tasks in SBE2, all involving fictional content. Comparing the four textbooks, IBE1 has the largest amount and the greatest variety of communicative tasks with different content.

In conclusion, among opportunities for output, IBE1 has the most tasks that push learners to produce target language to achieve communicative purposes, and FIB1

ranks the second. Considering the variety of opportunities for output, IBE 1 (a local coursebook) is the best coursebook for opportunities for output. FIB1 (an international coursebook) is the second best among the four textbooks. Both IBE1 and FIB1 are better than PSIBE1 and SBE2 as the latter two do not offer either many opportunities for output or many kinds of opportunities for output.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in a number of ways. Only two units of each book are covered in this study, and tasks in other units may contain more types of opportunities for output, and with more opportunities for output as well. Besides each coursebook is just one from a series of two to four textbooks. Maybe more opportunities for output and some types of output are included in other books from the same series.

Moreover, in this study, textbooks were considered as work plans, with no consideration given to how they were used in the classroom. When teachers use textbooks in the classroom, they may adapt or modify the content offered by the textbooks. Stodolsky (cited in Hutchinson & Torres, 1994) states that teachers adapt the content in classroom practice in light of their own convictions and preferences instead of teaching strictly by the book. Torres' study (cited in Hutchinson & Torres, 1994) shows even in teacher-fronted classrooms, neither teachers nor learners follow the textbook. Teachers tend to follow their own scripts by adapting, changing, adding and deleting tasks, task input or expected output. Therefore, even with textbooks designed

with plenty of opportunities for output in various ways, there is no guarantee that they will be used in this way in the classroom.

Furthermore, materials offering opportunities for output may not guarantee successful development of oral and written skills, when the role of the teacher and that of the learners and other factors are neglected. In other words, the role of teaching and learning material with substantial output opportunities may not be able to fully played in development of the learner's oral and written skills without consideration of other factors. Besides, even if the material is implemented as a work plan, it is still hard to predict how a learner will make use of the activity, such as how hard or at what level they push themselves to produce output according to the coursebook design.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

First of all, for teachers, the result of this study could be a basis for them to make decision related to textbooks selection and adaptation to meet the actual needs of learners in similar language teaching and learning programs. In addition, this study can be a reference for them to change, add, and reduce any task in the classroom setting.

And at the classroom level, given attention to the findings of this study, teachers may be well aware of the necessity to choose core teaching and learning materials with substantial, diverse output opportunities, to make good use of such opportunities and help the learners make progress in the two productive language skills, speaking and writing, and at the same time, to give clearer directions to the learners who may be

overwhelmed by piles of textbooks due to their choice of the learning materials at random.

Thirdly, this study may inform the learners of the significance of output and varieties of output, and thus make them fully aware of the necessity to develop their communicative competence through a good many exposures to output opportunities. The more they are engaged in output activities, the more likely they may attain their goals – to communicate in the target language with ease thanks to their access to the activities.

Fourthly, for teaching and learning material developers, this study display a glimpse of opportunities for output in currently used BE textbooks in China, therefore, they may have a reference for the future design. This study also offers a basis for design of a wider collection of tasks. And checklist used in this study also can be part of their checklist to design a wide collection of tasks for similar situations, for example, for their study in opportunities for output or for their study for other BE textbooks. From the detailed analysis and evaluation in this study, they may also have some reflection on what kind of textbooks they should develop to meet the learners' needs and which tasks can be included in the textbook for overall development of the learners' communicative ability in the long run.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Further studies could investigate the appropriateness of the textbooks for specific situations, and the possibilities of adoption and adaptation of these textbooks for Business English courses. As mentioned above, this study considers textbooks as work plans without consideration of how they are used at the classroom level. Therefore, one further study could look at using these textbooks in the classroom, with the purpose to see how opportunities for output in textbooks are used by teachers.

Another further study could focus on learners, such as how learners use opportunities for output in the textbooks, whether they follow the instruction of the textbooks, whether they "push" their language output, and how they modify the output.

Further study could also be expanded to other units in these textbooks to get more data for more detailed study of opportunities for output in each of these four textbooks. Comparative studies could include other textbooks in these textbooks' series. Also, the content of the checklist could be enriched to get more data about opportunities for output in further studies.

For researchers, the three methods adopted in this study may also apply to other similar studies of other BE textbooks or textbooks in other language programs with output opportunities in large quantity. The content of the checklist could be enriched to get more data of output opportunities In addition, researchers may analyze and evaluate other aspects of textbook, specifically, how to improve the learners' communicative competence through development of their speaking and writing skills.