

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study involves the process of selecting the research respondents, developing the research instruments, conducting questionnaires, collecting and analyzing the data.

3.1 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study consisted of three groups:

- (1) Forty first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences who were studying *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* as required in the first semester of the academic year 1999/2000 at Guizhou University of Technology.
- (2) Twenty students of Arts and Sciences who graduated from Guizhou University of Technology and have worked for at least one year. They were required to study *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* when they were in the first semester of the first academic year.
- (3) Ten Chinese teachers of English who were teaching the first-year

undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology.

The first group was chosen because they were studying *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* while this research was being conducted. They could productively indicate their current needs/preferences in English oral communication and serve as representatives for the target situation needs analysis; thereby, this group's responses could provide the grounds/bases for the researcher to propose the specification of methodology of the supplementary speaking skill material for the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology.

The second group was chosen because they could indicate their needs and problems in English speaking when they worked.

The third group was chosen because they were teaching the first-year students of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology. They could be informative in evaluating the material *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One* and indicating the students' proficiency level.

3.2 Instruments

The instruments employed in this study were four sets of questionnaires, six guidelines for analyzing EFL materials proposed by Dubin and Olstain (1990) and a framework for designing a material.

3.2.1 Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were given to the first-year undergraduate-respondents of Arts and Sciences enrolled in the first semester of the academic year

1999/2000 at Guizhou University of Technology. One set was given to the respondents who graduated from Guizhou University of Technology and have worked for at least one year. One set was given to the teachers who were teaching the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at Guizhou University of Technology.

Of those two questionnaires to the first-year undergraduate-respondents, one set (see appendix I, p. 100) was composed of five questions about the undergraduate-respondents' preferences on learning activities and teaching techniques by asking them to choose the answers from the options provided by the researcher. In the other set (see appendix II, p. 106), the researcher asked the undergraduate-respondents to choose five topics they wanted to learn most in their speaking classes. Eleven topics were given. Only five topics would be chosen and included in the supplementary speaking skill material because of the time limit—the supplementary material was for no more than one semester.

The questionnaire to the graduate-respondents (see appendix III, p. 107) was made up of eight open-ended questions, and dealt with graduate-respondents' problems in their work as far as conversational speaking skills were concerned.

The questionnaire to the teacher-respondents (see appendix IV, p. 108) consisted of 13 open-ended questions on the teacher-respondents' age, teaching experience, educational and professional background and their evaluation of the proficiency level of the students and their opinions about the Intensive Reading materials.

The frequency distribution and percentage of the responses were used to analyze the data from the aforementioned two sets of questionnaires to the first-year undergraduate-respondents.

3.2.2 Six Guidelines for Evaluating EFL Materials

The six guidelines proposed by Dubin and Olsain (1990) are expertise, compatibility of materials with syllabuses, alternatives, integration of the four macro skills, authenticity of texts and attitudes that both teacher and learner have towards materials (see p. 18-9). Such evaluation of the core material used by the first-year students is necessary in that it would form the framework for designing a supplementary material.

3.2.3 A Framework for Designing a Material

A framework for designing a teaching/learning material would detail the time for using the supplementary material, the number of units, what language functions should be covered in the material and how many hours would be appropriated for each unit, what activities would be used for each unit and the objectives of each lesson, how to incorporate the supplementary material into the structures, texts and exercises of *College English Intensive Reading, Volume One*, and the evaluation modes to check whether the objectives of each lesson have been achieved.

3.3 Data Collecting

In order to conduct this study, the researcher wrote a formal letter regarding using the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences, the graduates and Chinese teachers of English at Guizhou University of Technology as research respondents. This letter was presented both to the Student Affairs Office and the Foreign Language Department of Guizhou University of Technology. A list of students who graduated from Guizhou University of Technology at least one year ago was secured from the Student Affairs Office.

After obtaining the permission from the first-year undergraduates and the teachers to participate as research respondents, this researcher handed out two sets of questionnaires to the 40 first-year students of Arts and Sciences who were enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 1999/2000 in a lecture period and one set of questionnaires to 10 teachers at a departmental meeting. These three sets of questionnaires were collected by the researcher during class periods. Forty undergraduates (100%) returned those two sets of questionnaires, which were completely filled out and eight teachers (80%) returned the questionnaires completely filled out.

The researcher contacted the graduates and asked their permission to participate in this study. Twenty questionnaires were mailed out to 20 graduates. The researcher received 14 questionnaires through mail in two weeks, which were completely filled out by 14 graduates (70%).

The frequency distribution and percentage of the respondents used in this

study is summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Respondents of the Study

Respondents	Number of respondents anticipated	Responses received	
		Number	Percent
First-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences	40	40	100
Graduates	20	14	70
Teachers	10	8	80
Total	70	62	88.5

3.4 Data Analyzing

The researcher analyzed the respondents' needs tabulated from four sets of questionnaires. The approach used in the needs analysis was mainly the "target-situation analysis" (This approach looks into current and future situations where the target language is/will be used).

The responses from Questionnaire 1, which are concerned with the undergraduate-respondents' preferences for learning and teaching activities, are shown in five charts (see pp. 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36) using frequency distributions of the responses.

The replies from Questionnaire 2 are shown in table 3 (see p. 38) using the frequency distribution and percentages of the responses to indicate what the five topics the undergraduate-respondents prefer to learn first.

The responses from the graduate-respondents on eight open-ended questions from Questionnaire 3 are summarized in table 4 (see p. 40).

The teacher-respondents' replies to 13 open-ended questions from Questionnaire 4 are summarized in table 5 (see p. 43).

The researcher examined and evaluated the existing English intensive reading material used by the first-year undergraduates of Arts and Sciences at this university using the aforementioned six guidelines proposed by Dubin and Olstain (see pp. 18-9).

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