English Needs Analysis of Non-English Major Undergraduates in Private Universities

A Case Study

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Abstract—**Learners' needs analysis plays an important role in the teaching of college English. If intensive needs analysis is undone in foreign language education, it is impossible to raise the talents truly required by the society. Researches on needs analysis are on the rise in recent years in foreign language education. But research achievements are limited. Needs analysis, which has not been given due attention, is still a weak link in foreign language education. Research into needs analysis on college English is limited, and achievements are scarce. This thesis carried out research as the starting point, needs analysis theory as guide, Huanghe Science and Technology University as an example. The researcher addressed the following research questions: (1). What are the English learning needs of non-English major undergraduates? (2). What are the employers' perception of undergraduates' workplace English language needs and evaluation of college English teaching? (3). What are the implications for college English teaching? The result would provide valuable reference for needs analysis study, teaching reform, and policy-making in foreign language education.Based on the basic needs of triangulation by modern social sciences, three-dimension method was employed in this thesis to ensure scientificity and accuracy.Based on the results of the study, some implications were put forward.**

Keywords—needs analysis; English learning; private universities

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization and shrinking resources, there are growing demands for accountability in public life, including English education. A large number of college students in China have learned English as one of the foreign languages. Some of them are successful learners, while more of them have encountered difficulties. It's necessary for language teachers to help those learners who have problems in their learning. And the initial step to solve the problems of those students is to identify the learning needs of them. NAFLE (Needs Analysis in Foreign Language Education) has been widely accepted as the core in the system of foreign language teaching, and by taking into consideration the individual needs of learners, it helps create a linguistic theories-learners-teaching practice trinity in a real sense. It especially helps facilitate very specific activities in language education, like syllabus designing, material compiling,

course evaluation, language testing, and language policy-making. Although NAFLE has seen more than five hundred years of development and its techniques involved are believed to be at an advanced level, it does have room for improvement especially in its application in the private universities.

Nowadays, private university flourishes in China as Chinese education develops. However, students at private universities come from the third batch of candidates of National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), with a much lower academic level than students recruited in state-run universities. What's more, the students at private universities have relatively poorer learning foundation and their own characteristics which are different from students of public universities. But the reality is that education objectives, cultivation standards and course systems in private universities are more or less the same as undergraduate teaching in state-run universities. This poses a huge challenge for college English teaching in private universities. So, students in private universities often complain that they learn little knowledge from the English class. Teachers often complain about the low attendance rate. The society complains about the poor English proficiency of the graduates. The ineffectiveness of English teaching has been perplexing numerous teachers and students for a long time. What are the problems existing in college English teaching? What are the students' learning needs? What are the society's needs? Therefore, the English learning needs in private university are definitely worth investigating. And it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of the students in private universities.

As the focus of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) research shifts from teaching to learning, researchers pay more and more attention to individual language learners. It is recognized that learners have different needs and purposes in learning English. Recognition of learner's needs and learner's different learning styles has thus led to the view of learner-centered instruction. Learners' affective state is vital for learning. Focus on language learners leads to needs analysis in EFLT (English as Foreign Language Teaching). Referring to growing demands for accountability and relevancy in public life, Long(2005)cites four reasons for performing needs analyses: First, to determine the relevance

of the material to the learners' situations; second, to justify the material in terms of relevance for all parties concerned (teacher, learner, administration, parents); third, to account for differences in learner needs and styles; fourth, to create a syllabus which will meet the needs of the learners as fully as possible within the context of the situation. College English teaching and reform are based on English language needs analysis. So needs analysis provides theoretical foundation for administrators and researchers to collect information about learner's needs and society's needs to make proper and practical policy to guide college English teaching. However, a brief review of the domestic needs analysis research shows that few researches on NAFLE has been made and little importance has been attached to this subject. The statistics indicate that needs analysis research in China is badly needed, both theoretically and empirically (Shu Dingfang, Hua Weifen, 2009). Based on the shortages that exist in today's college English teaching, this study investigates non-English major undergraduates' learning needs in a private University. It also explores the present situation and characteristics of the students in private university. This study broadens the research area of foreign language needs analysis and enriches needs analysis theories and EFL theories.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a linguistic context, different scholars have different definitions on needs, and thus different meanings are implied. According to West (1994), the term "needs" is often considered an umbrella term, allowing different interpretations. Richterich (1983) distinguishes between "needs" and "wants". According to Richterich, "wants" is seen as "what the learners want or feel the need of" which are quite subjective, unforeseeable and indefinable. As to learning strategies, there are two types of needs. One is the learner's preferred strategies for progressing from where they are to where they want to go; the other is the teachers' strategies to help the learner meet the needs. In the mid-1980s, Brindley explained a distinction in detail drawn by Richterich (1972, Richterich and Chancerel, 1978) between "objective" needs and "subjective" needs. He also distinguished between initial and ongoing needs. Initial needs analysis is that carried out before a course begins. In most educational systems, this is very often beyond the control of the teacher, being determined by curriculum specialists. Ongoing needs analysis refers to the often relatively informal analysis carried out by teachers once a course has begun. Besides the distinction between objective needs and subjective needs, Keith Johnson (2002) preferred to draw a distinction between content needs and process needs. According to Widdowson (1978:2), needs may indicate students' study or future job requirements, which means what they can achieve after learning the course. Berwick (1989:52) suggested a basic definition of need: a need is a "gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state". Richards (2001) argues that the definition of needs depends on the perception of those making the judgment. Learners, teachers, employers, and administrators may all have different views as to what needs are.

In the 1920s, Michael West (Howatt, 1984, cited in Chen, 2009:125) carried out an analysis of Bengli's needs for English. It is the first time that the term "needs analysis" appeared in literature. As time went by, many studies have been done on needs analysis. A model of needs analysis in foreign language teaching that adopted to meet the communicative needs of learners in target situations was first formulated by Richterich (1972). Probably, the most thorough and widely known work on needs analysis is Communicative Syllabus Design written by John Munby (1982). According to Munby (1978:43,78), needs analysis is designed to make a balance between language courses and the needs of certain groups of students with different levels of language proficiency and learning objectives working in diverse countries. Munby presents a set of procedures, that is, the Communication Needs Processor (CNP) (1982), which consists of a range of questions and can be used to identify the needs of groups of students with different levels of language proficiency and learning objectives. In 1994, Richard West (1994) stated that there were only a handful of needs analysis studies that had come out over the last 25 years in his overview of needs analysis studies.

NAFLE abroad has already had more than five hundred years of development. A number of linguists have explored this domain and made needs analysis of a variety of subjects. Despite needs analysis for language originated mainly from ESP (English for Specific Purpose) courses; several researchers (Tarone & Yule 1989; Seedhouse 1995; Richards 2001) do see the importance of exploiting needs analysis in general language classes. Because by using needs analysis, learners are involved in their learning actively. As Nunan (1988) indicates, the involvement of learners is their rights in the learning process. As Richards (1990) has pointed out 'needs analysis is also fundamental to the planning of general English courses' (p.2). Therefore, the purpose of needs analysis of enabling the teacher to 'translate these needs into linguistic and pedagogical terms in order to teach an effective course' (Mackey 1978) in ESP courses would function as well in the general language class.

Over the past decade, there are only two articles on social needs analysis among all the articles retrieved. Li Mengtao, Gong Li (1994) launched a major investigation on English needs in science and technology. Results showed that the ability of rapid reading of scientific English waits for further enhancing; particularly the ability of speed reading and accurate reading. Research has shown that teachers ought to pay attention to speaking and writing skills. Meanwhile culture teaching should be integrated with language teaching in English teaching. Fu Zheng, Pang Jixian, Zhou Xing (2001) used questionnaires and interviews from 120 foreign trade and financial institutions in Zhejiang Province to obtain data regarding the impact of China' entry to WTO on college English teaching. The three researchers predicted how China's accession would affect the talents with certain ability and knowledge in foreign languages, and put forward some proposals to improve college English teaching.

To sum up, by reviewing literature, needs analysis brings flexibility to the teaching process and might very well enhance the possibility of reaching a more neutral balance

among learners, teachers, curriculum, and language. Unfortunately, the history of NAFLE abroad and in China shows that the well-developed techniques in NAFLE have rarely touched the area of general English in China.

III. METHODOLOGY

Given the significance and necessity of assessing the English needs of non-English major undergraduates, the researcher addressed the following research questions:

- What are the English learning needs of non-English major undergraduates?

- What are the employers' perception of undergraduates' workplace English language needs and evaluation of college English teaching?

- Can college English teaching meet the students' needs and social needs?

- What are the implications for college English teaching?

This study took non-English major undergraduates, their teachers, and their would-be employers as subjects. The reasons for choosing non-English major undergraduates were as follows. First, they made up the majority of all students in Huanghe S&T University, and they were the focus of TEFL. Second, they were representative, because English learning is the very kind of instruction that most non-English major undergraduates who wish to learn well here are expected to experience first. Third, the non-English major undergraduates were great in number and had relatively fixed places for living and learning within four years in university. So they were more accessible and manageable in such a large-scale survey as this one. The adult non-English students would be excluded in this study, for their views on learning English might lack consistency, and were more likely to be extreme cases because of their brief stay.

In the research of non-English major undergraduates' English learning needs, many research methods were involved, including questionnaire, descriptive statistics, and SPSS analysis.For reliability of the data obtained, the study followed the concept of triangulation of research instruments, i.e. the needs of non-English major undergraduates were analyzed along three dimensions: non-English major undergraduates, their teachers, their would-be employers.The questionnaires employed in this study were a modified version of the questionnaires used by Ni Chuanbin (2004). To ensure the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, three professors were consulted, three classroom observations were conducted. The questionnaires were piloted with representative samples of the corresponding participants. To avoid any misinterpretations, all the questions were developed in the participants' native language, namely, all the questionnaires were designed in Chinese.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Language Attitude

Attitude refers to some aspects of an individual's response to an object or class of objects and the situation with which it is related. It has been the focus of social science research. As an umbrella term, language attitude includes a wide range of possible empirical studies, involving a number of specific attitudes. Social psychologists have conducted a great deal of research on attitudes since 1920s. The result shows that learners with positive attitude are more likely to succeed in second language learning; however, learners with negative attitude are less likely to achieve success in second language learning. What's more, learners holding positive attitudes are likely to have these attitudes strengthened by success in the acquisition of second language learning; whereas negative attitudes may be reinforced by a lack of success (Ellis, 1994: 198—199). Therefore positive attitudes towards the language are certainly very important in language learning.

In the studies of language attitude, age has always been considered as an important factor affecting attitudes. In the present study, age was not a factor, because the age of the students was ranging from 17 to 20. Thus the age range was not large enough to make notable distinction. Therefore, age was not a significant factor affecting language attitudes. The main focus of this part was the overall attitude of the students towards English, not concerning a great deal of affective components, cognitive components, or conative components. This was different from studies titling language attitude. So there were some limitations in this part comparing the previous studies on language attitude. However, students' response to the items regarding language attitude did show useful results.

Motivation is the driving force that helps an individual to achieve his goals. "Fig. 1" It is closely related to attitude. Factors like favorable view of foreign language, eagerness for new lifestyle and history are helpful in foreign language learning. It's very difficult for people holding hostile and bad attitude towards foreign culture to learn foreign language well. If a learner has favorable and refreshing opinion of a foreign language and its structure, it should be fun for him to learn that foreign language. Learning a foreign language is a happy journey of trying new and exciting things. Instead, if a learner considers foreign language learning as hard and difficult, then he will not get the best part out of learning. Whether a learner is interested in learning materials and activities will affect learning emotions and attitudes. Teachers' personality is another important factor to a learner's attitude towards foreign language learning. Passionate, active, and knowledgeable teachers would have a positive impact on learners and learning.
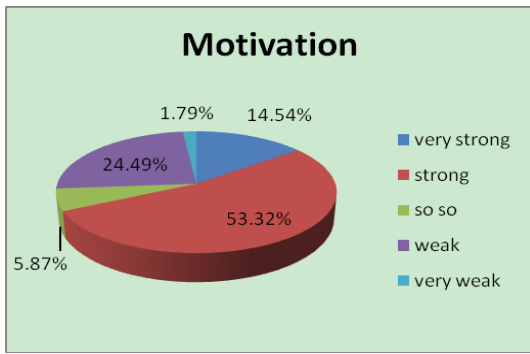
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Fig. 1. Motivation of the students

Item 3 is related to the rate of the significance of English class by students. As displayed in "Fig. 2", 17.1% of the students chose "very important"; more than half of the students (53.6%) chose "important"; 7.1% of the students chose "so so"; 5.9% of the students chose "not important"; and 6.1% of the students chose "not important at all".
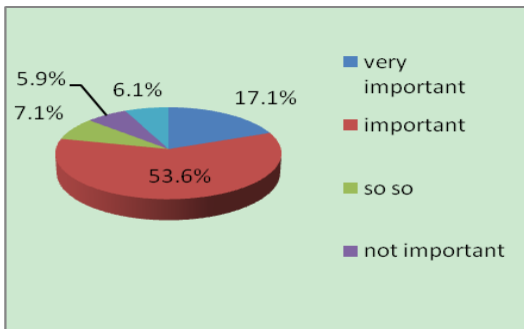

Fig. 2. The significance of English class by students

Item 4 is concerned with the rate of the interest of learning English by students. As demonstrated in "Fig. 3", 9.2% of the students were very interested in learning English; 53.8% of the students were interested in learning English; 8.4% of the students had moderate interest towards English learning; 22.4% of the students were not interested in learning English; 6.1% of the students were not interested in learning English at all.
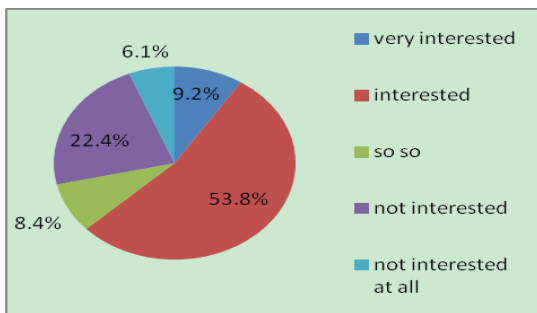

Fig. 3. The interest of learning English by students

Item 5 was designed to find out the rate of difficulty of learning English by students. As indicated in "Fig. 4", 8.9% of the students thought that English was very easy to learn; 6.4% of the students thought that English was easy to learn;

36.2% of the students thought that English was neither easy nor difficult to learn; 30% of the students thought that it was difficult for them to learn English; 17.6% of the students thought that it was very difficult for them to learn English.
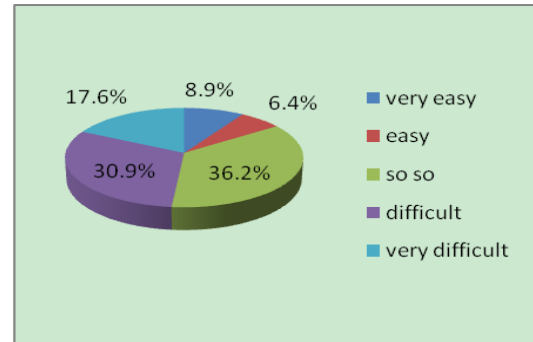

Fig. 4. Difficulty of learning English by students

B. Learning Purpose

1) Views held by students: "Fig. 5" demonstrates students' learning purpose of English. Majority of the students(64.3%) learned English to pass exams and get diploma; 18.1% of the students wanted to go further study for postgraduate; 23% of the students learned English without a clear purpose; 4.8% of the students learned English to make preparations for going abroad; 60.2% of the students wanted to improve their own qualities through learning English; 20.9% of the students learned English because they were interested in English language and culture; 16.1% of the students learned English for other unstated purposes.
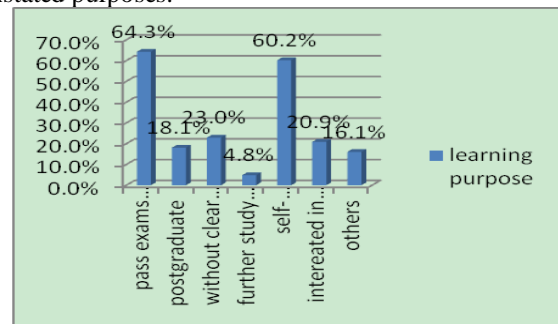

Fig. 5. Students' learning purpose of learning English

2) Views held by teachers: "Fig. 6" displayed students' learning purpose of English in teacher's views. From the teacher's point of view, most of the students(88.2) learned English to pass exams and get diploma; 58.8% of the students had the purpose of being a postgraduate; 67.6% of the students did not have a clear purpose to learn English; 11.8% of the students wanted to go abroad for further study; 32.4% of the students wanted to develop self-improvement through English learning; 32.4% of the students were interested in English language and its culture; 2.9% of the students had other purposes to learn English.
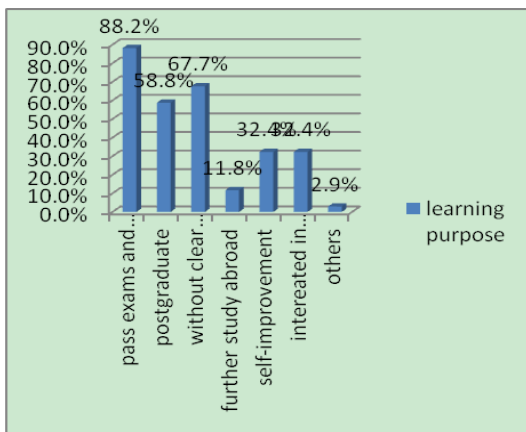
Fig. 6.   Students' learning purpose of learning English in teachers' views

3) Comparison between the views held by teachers and students: The comparison of the views on learning purpose indicates that there were great differences existing between teachers and students. In terms of types of learning purpose, there were three types where teachers and students hold contradictory opinions: the first (where teachers held positive opinions while students negative) was: "to become a postgraduate"; the second (where teachers held negative opinions while students positive) was: "to learn English without clear purpose"; the third (where teachers held positive opinions while students negative) was: "to learn English for self-development". Obviously, the teachers tended to think that students were utilitarian. On the contrary, students were not as utilitarian as teachers thought. They learned English in order to improve and develop themselves. Teachers, in a way, were not clearly aware of their students' purposes in learning English.

Purpose is defined as an anticipated outcome that a person sets for himself as an object to be reached or accomplished (Feng Huimin 1994: 27). Whatever the underlining purposes in learning a foreign language, communicative competence remains an essential condition (Lu Bisong 1995:12). Therefore, it is very necessary to identify individual learners' learning purpose. A large-scale survey is a relatively scientific way of measuring learners' learning purpose. Some studies concerning the purposes of learning English as a second language show that people learn a second language with similar purposes. Different learners may have specific purposes of learning a second language because the scopes of language that the learners' used. As for the comparison between the views held by students and teachers, English is used as a tool to accomplish something, like a diploma, postgraduate degree, or the opportunity for further study abroad. And teachers are not familiar enough with the students. There is in lack of communication between students and teachers. With the joint efforts of both sides, relations between students and teachers will be improved a lot.

C. Learning Needs

1) Classroom Learning

a) Preferred ways of lecturing: As suggested in "Fig. 7", teachers and students held different views about the preferred approach to lecturing, 38.8% of the students wanted to learn English under teacher's instruction, while 14.7% of the teachers were willing to prefer teacher's instruction; 38.3% of the students liked group work in class, whereas 70.6% of the teachers liked group work; 14.8% of the students wanted to practice English on their own in class, while 2.9% of the teachers wanted to ask the students to practice on their own in class. However, both students and teachers shared similar views on pair work.
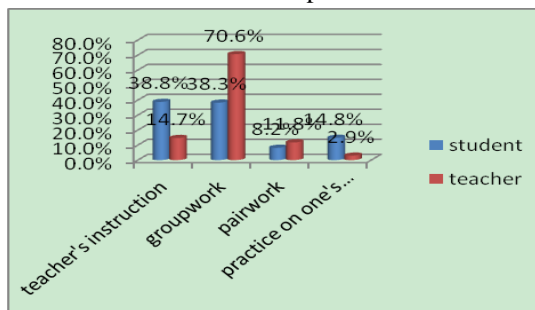

Fig. 7.   Preferred ways of lecturing

Class groupings are diverse based on various backgrounds and cultures. Teacher's instruction is a kind of class grouping where all the students are working with the teacher. It is a traditional way of lecturing adopted by many teachers due to its advantages. If students learn under teacher's instruction, students who are shy and intimidated will be provided more opportunities to practice oral English. But only a few of the students will get the opportunities to speak in class particularly when the class is very large. Even so, it is popular among teachers when there are answers to check or presentations to make. Group work usually refers to work done by a small group. Group work promotes the students to become more responsible and independent in learning by providing more opportunities to use English to communicate with each other. Pair work is another way of lecturing where the students are put to work in pairs. Pair work is more effective than teacher's instruction and group work through promoting students' participation and cooperation. A student will become extremely relaxed when he or she is talking with a person known well. But students may become bored and restless when they do pair work for many times. To practice on one's own is to develop individual study. When the students have freedom to practice on their own, they may need self-discipline. Individual study moves on smoothly as long as there are disciplined students and helpful teachers.

b) Preference for error correction: As demonstrated in "Fig. 8", a significant difference could be detected between teachers and students in views about "preference for error correction", mainly in terms of "in front of everyone immediately" and "in front of everyone later". 9.9% of the students chose to be corrected in front of

everyone immediately when they made a mistake in class, while 67.7% of the teachers chose to correct students' mistake in front of everyone immediately in class; 73.2% of the students chose to be corrected in front of everyone later when they made a mistake, whereas none of the teachers chose this way of error correction.
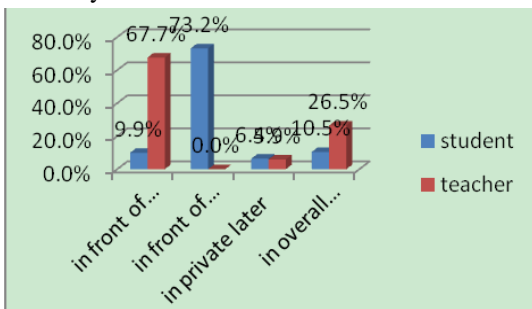

Fig. 8. Preference for error correction

Classroom teaching is considered the main route of learning English. Whether a teacher can handle error correction effectively or not directly affects efficiency and quality in students' study. In the current situation, students are not pleased with the ways of teachers' error correction. There are some differences on the preferred way of error correction between students and teachers. Teachers must seek out relevant different types of errors, define key issues, and decide on which steps to take to get the desired results. Teachers should correct different types of errors and mistakes in various ways in order to improve teaching efficiency.

c) Teaching content: As illustrated in "Fig. 9", most of teachers and students shared the view that teacher's lectures were sometimes interesting, sometimes boring. But they had different opinions on the following choices: "boring" and "wonderful". 32.1% of the students thought that teacher's lectures were very boring and not willing to attend the class often, while the rate of this choice for teachers was 8.8%; 17.9% of the students thought that each lecture was wonderful, while the rate of this choice for teachers was 44.3%. The teachers might overestimate their own performance in class because of face-saving. After all, answers from the teachers themselves were subjective to a large degree.
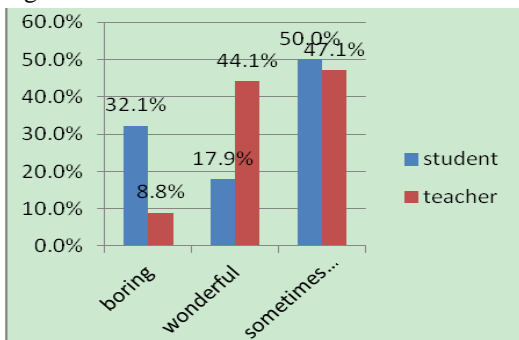

Fig. 9. Teaching content

In the early 1990s, when researchers describe teaching content, they always highlighted content-centered training and task-based classroom activities. Now, there are increasing contents of psychology and social reality in classroom teaching. Classroom teaching is becoming more inclined to integrate a variety of skills. Scholars give a stronger emphasis on the significance of needs analysis and integration between teaching content and social reality. Hotspot issues like world peace, environment, animal protection, race and counterterrorism become core elements in classroom teaching. But, it is worth noting that teaching method will also change due to the learning of new topics. Classroom teaching can enable the learners to combine the tasks with social activity and real communicative situation. Moreover, as the development of English all over the world, many scholars will support to put the varieties of English into teaching content.

d) Teaching method: As for the satisfaction of teaching method, teachers and students held different opinions. The main difference lied in the following choice: "so so". More than half of the teachers (55.9%) thought that their own performance in class was just so so. "Fig. 10" That is, teachers did not think highly of their own teaching method. Teachers were not happy with themselves.
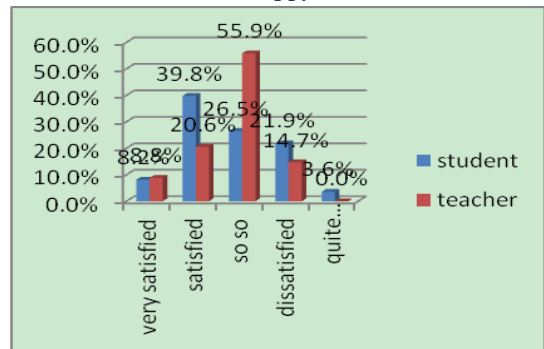

Fig. 10. Teaching method

The research on teaching method has been an eternal topic in foreign language teaching. Researchers have been searching for the best teaching method to solve the realistic problems in language teaching since the 19th century. Throughout the history of foreign language teaching, various teaching methods surged. These methods include grammatical translation, direct approach, listening and speaking approach and the communicative method. Many scholars have talked about all kinds of teaching methods and the application of those teaching methods. It is impossible to find out a universally applicable teaching method because of different learning backgrounds and learning environment. Teachers should choose teaching method based on particular situation of the teaching objects. It is important for teachers to understand the recent development of foreign language teaching. Teachers can learn wisdom from various teaching methods, update teaching ideas, broaden thinking, and improve teaching skills, then form an idea and gradually come into one's own style.

2) Extracurricular Activities: "Fig. 11" suggested that no difference existed between teachers and students in their opinions about extracurricular activities. Both teachers and students considered it helpful to take part in extracurricular activities.
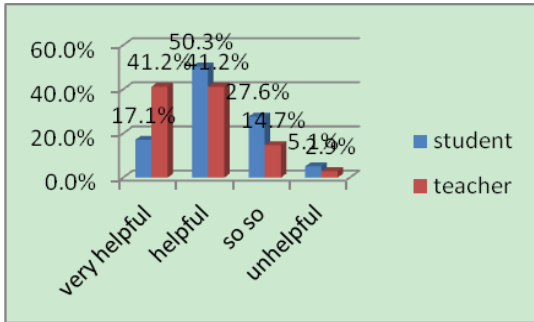

Fig. 11. Extracurricular activities

3) Textbook: As for the textbook used for English learning, students were more positive than teachers. Most of the students liked the textbook, but 52.9% of the teachers held the view that the current textbook was just so so. "Fig. 12"
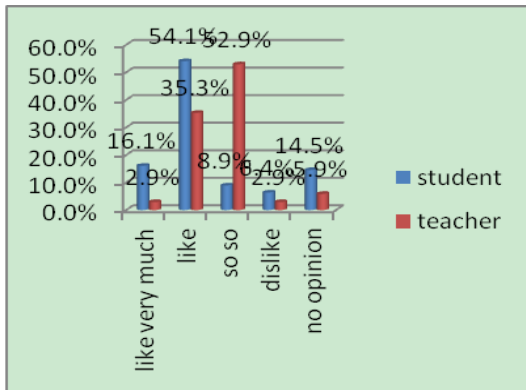

Fig. 12. Textbook

As for the difficulty of the current textbook, teachers and students held the same opinion. Both of them preferred that the textbook was moderate. No significant difference existed between teachers and students. "Fig. 13"
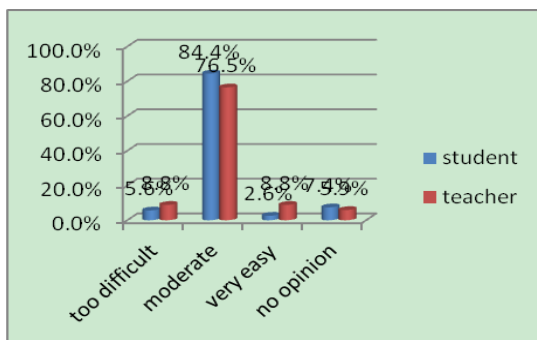

Fig. 13. Difficulty of course book

Foreign language textbook is crucial for the implementation of the syllabus. It is the main basis for organizing the class activity and core element in education. The quality of the textbook is directly relevant to the quality of foreign language teaching, playing a very important role in foreign language teaching. New Horizon College English Book has interesting and vivid teaching materials, which will activate students. This textbook provides a sensible progression of language items, clearly showing what has to be learnt and summarizing what has been studied. It is also systematic about the vocabulary, grammar, and syntactic relations. More importantly, it relieves the teacher from the pressure of having to think of original material for every class, and provides a variety of choices for teaching and learning.

4) Academic condition and atmosphere: As exhibited in "Fig. 14", no significant difference was shown between students and teachers in their views about the academic condition and atmosphere. Both students and teachers did not think much of the current academic condition and atmosphere. They tended to become dissatisfied with the current academic condition and atmosphere.
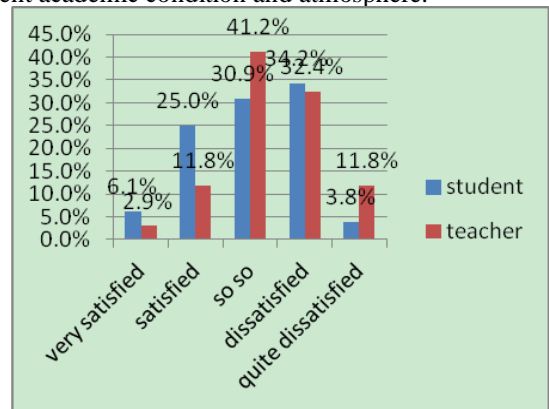

Fig. 14. Academic condition and atmosphere

Students are to benefit from a rich learning environment. Many of the improvements in the learning environment targeted basic and critical infrastructure needs. The university should also analyze and adjust the education environment in order to produce a more efficient and effective learning result for the students. So it is very important to create a kind of learning environment based on the needs of students. Creating a better learning environment for students by instituting a course approach that appeals to a wide variety of personality types and learning styles is a good choice. Each student wants to find an optimal learning environment to provide himself or herself with a guarantee for successful language learning. Teachers are a great helper to create a casual learning environment. Therefore, with the joint efforts of both university and teachers, a fertile learning environment can be developed well. Academic atmosphere is a basic condition for academic development. A good university should be free and open with a strong academic atmosphere. Teaches should help students get comfortable with their academic atmosphere. The thick academic atmosphere construction is the lifeblood to a university.

Students will definitely benefit a lot from strong atmosphere in their university.

D. Difficulties in Learning

As for the biggest weakness in learning English by students, 29.8% of the students chose "listening"; 27% of the students chose "speaking"; 25.3% of the students chose "writing"; 7.4% of the students chose "reading"; 10.5% of the students chose "translating". Students had various biggest weaknesses. "Fig. 15"
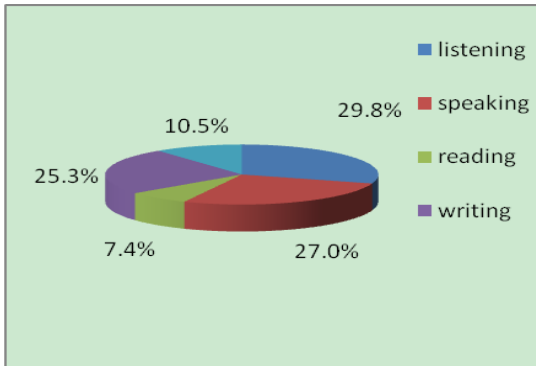

Fig. 15. The biggest weakness in learning by students

As for the main difficulties encountered by students in learning English, students had all kinds of difficulties, including grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing, reading, translating, and so on. Students ranked the difficulties in this order: listening was the most difficult, then vocabulary, writing, speaking, grammar, reading, and followed by translating. As indicated in "Fig. 16", "listening" took the first place among the difficulties encountered by students in learning English. "Listening", "vocabulary", "writing", "speaking", "grammar" were prominent among the difficulties encountered by students.
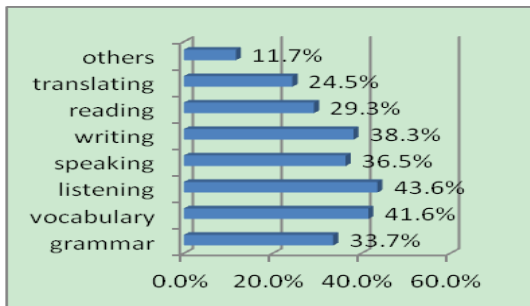

Fig. 16. Main difficulties encountered by students in learning

E. Social Needs

Survey on social needs should include the following several content mainly. Firstly, what kind of talents is really needed by the society? Secondly, what kind of foreign language level does the society need? Thirdly, what is the current status of foreign language talents and the use foreign languages? Generally speaking, foreign language talents required by the society can be classified into specialized foreign language talents and quality foreign language talents. Specialized foreign language talents refer to the talents who are English majors, such as professionals in linguistics and professional translator. Quality foreign language talents refer to talents with varying degrees of foreign language proficiency, like diplomats, researchers, foreign enterprise employee, and so on. There is, of course, a possibility that some learners learning a foreign language just want to grasp basic knowledge, while some may take foreign language learning as intelligence development or a hobby without clear goals. It is clear that different industries and different kind of jobs have different requirements for language learners' proficiency. For instance, foreign language teachers and senior translators are required to have superior foreign language skills; members of the service staff working in travel agency, hotel, and airport are required to command good verbal communication skills; researchers should pay more attention to the abilities of reading and writing. Language learners' current use of language learning is another important content of social needs analysis, which includes the nature of the work, language skills used in business, lack of knowledge, and the help needed, etc. This sort of information can be used to evaluate the talents cultivation mode and curriculum system of foreign language.

4.5.1 Needs for English by employers

The employer and the society highlighted the growing demand for English, but there were need diversities between different employers and different departments. According to the statistics displayed in "Table I", English was valued highly in public institutions, foreign-owned enterprises, and private enterprises. 42.9% of the employers surveyed from public institutions took English as a necessary skill for employees. And 42.9% from private enterprises expressed the same view as those from public institutions. English was regarded as an important basis for selecting qualified personnel for employees. Statistics still showed that as an important foreign language, English played an increasingly important role governmental organizations and private enterprises.

TABLE I.   RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGLISH LEVEL

	A. yes, it is a necessary skill	B. not always, it is the important reference	C. no, there is no required English level	D. it depends on specific posts	subtotal
government agencies	0(0%)	2(40%)	0(0%)	3(60%)	5
public institutions	8(42.1%)	6(31.6%)	1(5.3%)	4(21.0%)	19
state-owned enterprises	0(0%)	2(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2
foreign-owned enterprises	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1
joint ventures	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	1
private enterprises	6(42.9%)	4(28.5%)	2(14.3%)	2(14.3%)	14

Social needs towards college English sometimes showed up indirectly through various English certificates. This study investigated employers' views on diverse English certificates. "Table II" displayed the statistical description of employers' consideration standards for the employees'' English proficiency. In all, 40% out of the employers from government agencies thought employees' English proficiency was largely based on English certificates. A great majority of the employers (68.4%) from public institutions thought certificates like CET-4 or CET-6 were very important to test the English proficiency of the new hires. While in private enterprises, the rate was 42.9%.These data indicated that English proficiency tests, especially CET-4 and CET-6 were the most widely accepted tests at the moment. Certificates for passing those CET4 and CET6 became an important measurement of the English level of your employees.

TABLE II. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIRED BY EMPLOYERS

	A. certificate of CET	B. Cambridge Business English or translating Certificate	C. English specialty with extensive knowledge	D. basic communication skill in speaking and listening	subtotal
government agencies	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	5
public institutions	13 (68.4%)	0 (0%)	3 (15.8%)	3 (15.8%)	19
state-owned enterprises	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
foreign-owned enterprises	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
joint ventures	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
private enterprises	6 (42.9%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (21.4%)	4 (28.6%)	14

As demonstrated in "Table III", more than half of the employers from public institutions, state-owned enterprises, and private enterprises required the new hires to get the certificate of CET-4. On one hand, this phenomenon was relevant to the long-established brand effect of CET; on the other hand, the educational department needed establishing scientific reasonable system of examination and evaluation.

TABLE III. RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGLISH CERTIFICATE

	A. CET-4	B. CET-6	C. PETS-3	D. PETS-4	E. no requirement	G. others	subtotal
government agencies	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	5
public institutions	10 (52.6%)	5 (26.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (21.1%)	0 (0%)	19
state-owned enterprises	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2
foreign-owned enterprises	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
joint ventures	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
private enterprises	7 (50%)	2 (14.3%)	1 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (21.4%)	14

Employers often attached great importance to employees' English proficiency, and had a high requirement towards the employees' English proficiency. However, they were not quite satisfied with the English language ability of employees. As displayed in "Table IV", employer satisfaction was obvious to find out. The result showed that the employers were not quite satisfied with the new hires' English language skills. There remained room for the new hires to improve their English language skills.

TABLE IV. SATISFACTION OF ENGLISH SKILLS BY EMPLOYERS

	A. very satisfied	B. so so	C. remain room to improve	D. dissatisfied	subtotal
government agencies	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	5
public institutions	2 (10.5%)	15 (79.1%)	1 (5.2%)	1 (5.2%)	19
state-owned enterprises	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
foreign-owned enterprises	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
joint ventures	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
private enterprises	2 (14.3%)	10 (71.4%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (7.1%)	14

The weaknesses of the new hires' English language skills were displayed in "Table V", which demonstrated that speaking was the greatest weakness for the new hires. In order of the weakest, it went: speaking, listening, translating, writing, and reading. Thus it could be seen that there's still plenty of room for improvement of the new hires' English language skills. And yet, the main obstacle to such condition was speaking ability, which was badly in need of improving for Chinese language learners.

TABLE V. WEAKNESSES OF THE NEW HIRES' ENGLISH LEVELS

	listening	speaking	reading	writing	translating
government agencies	1 (20%)	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)
public institutions	5 (26.3%)	17 (89.5%)	1 (5.3%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)
state-owned enterprises	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)
foreign-owned enterprises	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
joint ventures	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
private enterprises	5 (35.7%)	10 (71.4%)	2 (14.3%)	5 (35.7%)	5 (35.7%)

1) Needs for English by different posts: In this part, the four items were designed to investigate the frequency of English used by people from different posts. As the choices of each item were adapted from Five-point Likert scale, the mean over 3 indicated that the low frequency of English used by people from different posts.

Item 19 was designed to find out the frequency of English used by top managers. The mean of Item 19 was 2.50 displayed in "Table VI", which demonstrated that English was frequently used among the top managers. Item 21 is concerned with the frequency of English used by middle-level managers. The mean of Item 21 was 2.90, which indicated that the frequency of English used by middle-level managers was neither often nor rarely. Item 23 is related to the frequency of English used by low-level managers. Generally speaking, the result shown in the table indicated that low-level managers did not use English often at work, which was supported by mean 3.40 on a five point scale. Item 25 is employed to find out the frequency of English used by workers. The result shown in the table demonstrated that workers rarely used English at work, which was indicated by mean 3.76 on a five point scale.

TABLE VI.   FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH USED BY DIFFERENT POSTS

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
19. top managers	2.50	.890
21. middle-level managers	2.90	.983
23. low-level managers	3.40	1.149
25. workers	3.76	1.144

a. Choices of the item are adapted from Five Likert Scale (A. "Very often" B. "Often" C. "Sometimes" D. "Rarely" E. "Never"). And each choice represents 1 point to 5 points (from choice A to E).

Based on the results of the frequency of English used by people from different posts described above, it could be concluded that the frequency of English was different when it was used by people from different posts. Obviously, "top manager" took the first place among the frequency of English used at work. The order of frequency from "very often" to "never" was: top managers, middle-level managers, low-level managers, and workers.

2) Evaluation of the college English teaching by employers: Item 10 was designed to find out the overall evaluation of English learning at college by employers. As displayed in "Table VII", the mean of Item 10 was 2.95, which demonstrated that the employers were not satisfied with their college English learning.

TABLE VII.   OVERALL EVALUATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH LEARNING

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
10. Overall evaluation of college English learning.	2.95	.936

b. Choices of the item are adapted from Five Likert Scale (A. "Very satisfied" B. "Satisfied" C. "So so" D. "Dissatisfied" E. "Very dissatisfied"). And each choice represents 1 point to 5 points (from choice A to E).

Item 11 is related to the employers' opinions of the importance of teaching method. The result shown in "Table VIII" indicated that teaching method was very important in English learning, which was supported by mean 1.93 on a five point scale.

TABLE VIII.   IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING METHOD

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
11. Teaching method is very important in English learning.	1.93	.745

c. Choices of the item are adapted from Five Likert Scale (A. "Strongly Agree" B. "Agree" C. "Not Sure" D. "Disagree" E. "Strongly Disagree"). And each choice represents 1 point to 5 points (from choice A to E).

Item 12 listed in "Table IX" was designed to explore employers' views on independent learning. Independent learning means the ability to take charge of one's own learning. It is an effective style of learning English. The mean of Item 12 was 1.55, which demonstrated that students' independent learning ability was very important in the process of English learning.

TABLE IX.   IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
12. The independent learning ability is very important.	1.55	.593

d. Choices of the item are adapted from Five Likert Scale (A. "Strongly Agree" B. "Agree" C. "Not Sure" D. "Disagree" E. "Strongly Disagree"). And each choice represents 1 point to 5 points (from choice A to E).

Item 13 is concerned with employers' satisfaction with English learned at college. It is designed to check whether the English learned at college can basically meet the requirements of work. The mean of Item 13 displayed in "Table X" is 2.86, which indicated that English learned at college is not enough to meet the requirements of work basically.

TABLE X.   EMPLOYERS' SATISFACTION OF ENGLISH LEARNED AT COLLEGE

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
13. English you have learned at college can basically meet the requirements of work.	2.86	.843

e. Choices of the item are adapted from Five Likert Scale (A. "Strongly Agree" B. "Agree" C. "Not Sure" D. "Disagree" E. "Strongly Disagree"). And each choice represents 1 point to 5 points (from choice A to E).

In short, according to the mean score of each item, employers were not very satisfied with their own English learned at college. English learned at college could not basically meet the requirements of work. However, employers thought that both teaching method and independent learning were very important in English learning. And independent learning was more important than teaching method.

F. Needs Conflict

1) Conflict between learner needs and teacher needs: "Fig. 17" displayed the statistical description of the conflict between students' greatest weakness in learning and teachers' greatest weakness in teaching. As demonstrated in the table, students and teachers shared the same greatest weakness in listening, speaking, and writing. That is, the students were poor at listening, speaking, and writing. So were the teachers. Both students and teachers had weaknesses, and they share many of them. Teachers could not give help to alleviate students' weaknesses because teachers were poor at those areas too. Teachers' knowledge

could not meet the need of the students. So, teachers had to develop and improve themselves in order to promote students' learning.
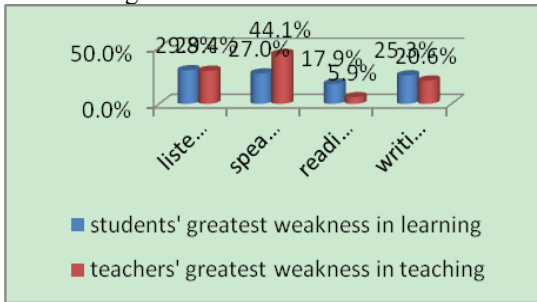

Fig. 17. Students' and teachers' weaknesses in learning and teaching

"Fig. 18" demonstrated the statistical description of the conflict between students' hardest thing in learning English and teachers' hardest thing in teaching English. The results showed that teachers' views shared a great deal in common with students. They had the same hardest thing in many aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, speaking, and writing. However, teachers might be helpful in assisting students to improve listening. The conflict between students and teachers was very clear. There was much room for teachers' self-improvement. This was an abnormal phenomenon and we must work seriously to eradicate it. Students' college learning, to a certain extent, was hindered by teachers' lack of sophisticated language skills. If teachers do not develop themselves, they cannot be good teachers. Thus, teacher's self-improvement was in great need.
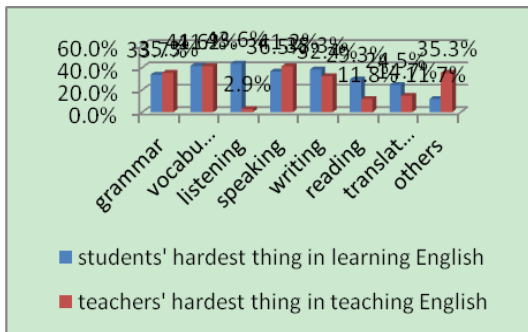

Fig. 18. The hardest thing in learning and teaching

"Fig. 19" revealed the statistical description of the conflict between students' views on their own learning ability and teachers' views on students' learning ability. As indicated in the table, a significant difference could be detected, 17.9% of the students thought that their learning ability was very strong, while 2.9% of the teachers thought that students' learning ability was strong; 57.5% of the students chose "strong", whereas 32.4% of the teachers chose "strong". 12.8% of the students thought that their learning ability was just so so, while the rate of teachers on this choice was 58.8%. In a summary, teachers were not clearly aware of students' learning ability in learning English.
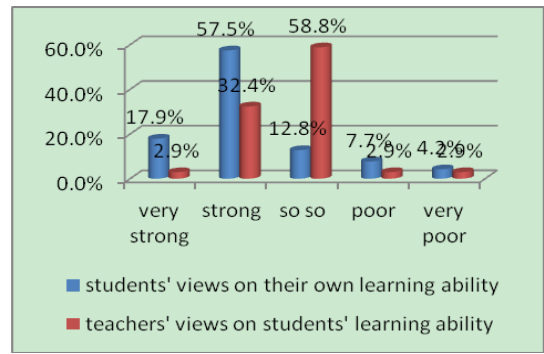

Fig. 19. Students' and teachers' views on students' learning ability

2) Conflict between learner needs and social needs: According to "Table II", "Fig. 17" and "Fig. 18", the talents cultivated at college could not fit in with the social needs. What the students lack were the skills of listening and speaking, while what the employers need were the skills of listening and speaking. Students' needs were not consistent with the social needs. This phenomenon was against training the personnel welcomed by the employers. So, there was a "major gap" in research about foreign language teaching needs analysis theory and practice research. It had to spend big effort on foreign language teaching needs analysis theory and practice. Proper social needs analysis helps build a scientific and reasonable syllabus, personnel training model, reasonable curricular arrangement, and teaching goals in order to cultivate the talents that meet different levels of social needs.

Social interactions are usually context embedded occurring in meaningful social settings. As the new hires' listening and oral language skills start to develop, they will be able to add more challenging activities including holding predictable conversations with teachers and peers, decoding simple reading passages, listening to and understanding a simple story, etc. Students don't always acquire language skills needed by society naturally in classroom learning. They may need to be taught by teachers on how to communicate appropriately in social situations. Students may need to be specifically taught communicative skills such as how to greet people, give and receive compliments, apologize, and make polite requests. They also need to understand body language and the use of body language. Various ways, such as role playing, teacher modeling, peer modeling, and videos, can be used by teachers to teach students the social skills. Teachers should encourage students to practice the social skills many times. Frequent interaction practices will help students to master the social skills well. Teachers and administrators may provide more chances for students to reinforce their social communication skills. These chances may be not necessarily prepared for students in the classroom; extracurricular activities will help a lot in this respect.

V.   PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Classroom activities are interactions both between teachers and students and among students themselves. The

relationship between teachers and students must be dealt with properly in order to develop English teaching activities efficiently. Students are the principal part of learning and active participants in classroom activities. Teachers should trust the students and leave them more freedom. Teachers may help students to set up goals in the class, arouse their initiative, and guide them in making independent reflections based on their goals. Practices show that classroom activities under the guidance of teacher are the very concrete reflections of student-centered teaching strategies. The proper design of classroom activities requires that teachers have to abide by the principles of teaching activity design, including theoretical principles, system principles and innovation principles. To ensure the effectiveness of classroom activities, teachers are required to make systematic assessments towards the students' performance. It is only with interaction between teachers and students that classroom activities can be improved and promoted day by day. Besides, the selection of activity contents should be based on students' learning goals and learning needs. Therefore, it is essential to establish the teacher-student interaction model in class.

According to the program of personnel training, college English teaching should give first place to the quality-oriented education while making the examination-oriented education subsidiary. To properly handle the relationships between the public English testing and the language skills is very significant for both students and teachers. Local education departments should prevent one-sided emphasis on the negative impact of public English testing. After all, college English tests, especially CET-4 and CET-6, are extremely important for the students for being required by quite a few employers. In many cases, a certificate of CET-4 or CET-6 is the very premise of job hunting. So passing them or not would greatly influence students' future. English teachers should teach some test skills for students who want to pass CET-4 or CET-6. And at the same time, some practical and communicative language skills ought to be taught to the students in order that students may promote overall and all-round development.

Extracurricular activities are a wide range of additional activities conducted outside the regular classroom instructions. Extracurricular activities are the extension and complement of classroom activities, which help create comfortable and authentic language surroundings for the students. Therefore, allowing students have meaningful language communication, increase their language practice ability, apply what they learn to practice, and activate students' own initiatives. Extracurricular activities develop students self-learning ability, transfer the roles of teacher and students, and enhance the study effect. All sorts of extracurricular activities can be organized according to students' learning needs in language teaching practice.Rich and colorful extracurricular activities on language learning provide the students multiple practice opportunities, stimulate their interest, and create a favorable atmosphere for the students to improve their comprehensive language application ability.

Teachers are critical to educational reform and development. The quality of teaching is constrained by various factors: language competences, teaching conception, teaching theory, teaching skills, and self-development capacity. A language teacher should not only know about the foreign language, but also know how language learning takes place and how to surround his students with the best possible condition for his learning and then supervise and guide his practice. The language teacher is an organizer, which is the most important and difficult role that the teacher has to play. The success of many class activities depends on the good organization and their instruction of the teacher. The language teacher is an assessor, which is the major part of a teacher's job. Organizing feedback is an effective way to assess students' performance of a learning task so that they can see the extent of their success or failure, usually with the objective of improving their performance. The language teacher is a promoter, giving students appropriate prompts in the class activity. The language teacher is a participant, sometimes playing a role rather than standing in front of the classroom giving instructions. The language teacher is a kind of resource who is ready to offer advice and counsel whenever the students seek it. The language teacher is a controller when he is always in charge of every moment in the classroom. The language teacher is a psychologist who treats every student equally so that the students receive a sense of security and produce cooperation. The role of language teacher has been developing with the development of education. In other words, a teacher's job is not just to transmit knowledge of a foreign language.

Evaluation is an essential part in College English teaching. It is very significant to develop a scientific and accurate evaluation system to achieve the goals of College English teaching. a good evaluation system can not only help teachers to obtain feedbacks from the students and improve teaching quality, but also it will help students with their learning strategies and methods to enhance learning efficiency. The evaluation of students' learning is composed of formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment refers to procedural and developmental assessment, including students' self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment conducted by teachers and school administrators. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of a teaching phase, containing final tests and proficiency tests. The evaluation of teachers' teaching processes and effects are usually also included.

VI. CONCLUSION

First, students are greatly in need of increasing their English proficiency in English. Students have positive attitudes towards English learning. More than half of the students investigated perceive that English is very important and they are interested in learning English. Though facing difficulties, students are still motivated highly in learning English. Quite a few of them want to improve their own qualities through English learning. As for classroom learning, students want to learn English by means of teacher's instruction and group work. They want to be corrected in front of classmates later when they make a mistake. And

they hold the views that teacher's lectures are sometimes boring and just so so by quality. Extracurricular activities help the students a lot in learning English. As for textbook, students do not show any difference because they are freshmen. As for academic condition and atmosphere, students are dissatisfied with the current learning environment. As for the difficulties encountered in learning English, limited vocabulary, poor listening, speaking, writing, grammar and reading are ranked by the majority of the students. Students' opinions are not always reliable and are quite diverse. It is difficult for teachers to respond to their needs reasonably. In addition, students will do a wide range of jobs after graduation. Therefore, it will be complicated to analyze and meet students' needs for such diverse groups.

Second, the teachers are not aware of the needs of the students. The teaching situation is challenging for English teachers. Teachers are facing difficulties and challenges. First of all, the teachers' attitudes towards students' learning abilities might be negative. Teachers are not confident of students' learning abilities and attitudes. Secondly, teachers can not meet students' learning needs, especially in speaking. Teachers need to try to adjust their own English teaching based on students' needs. Teachers must be aware of students' needs and try to find effective ways to meet the learning needs of students.

Third, employer representatives, who are coming from the personnel department, provided useful information about the importance of English, their expectations and needs regarding new hires, and some general evaluations about their own college English learning. The employers highlight the growing demand for English. English is a necessary skill for the new employees. And English certificates are very important for seeking a job. Employers often attach great importance to employees' English proficiency, and have a high requirement towards the employees' English proficiency. However, they are not satisfied with the new employees' English language skills, especially in speaking. The frequency of English used by people from different posts is different. Top managers use English more often at work. Finally, employers' evaluations on their own college English learning are not very high.

Finally, learners' needs analysis is the initial step and the key step in the whole process of college English teaching in China. A well-conducted needs analysis will finally enhance the quality of language teaching programs. Inevitably, success rates for language learners will be greatly improved. So researchers in this field should be continuously involved in attempts to improve their approaches on needs analysis research.

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