

EXPLORING PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

Textbooks are an integral part of teaching and learning in Chinese College English classroom . However , they rarely provide adequate pragmatic information for students to successfully develop their pragmatic competence . This study will examine four College English (New) Listening and Speaking textbooks to find out the nature of pragmatic materials and tasks included in the textbooks . The findings indicate that there is a dearth of pragmatic information contained in the Listening and Speaking textbooks and the variety of pragmatic information is limited . Most of the metapragmatic explanations are simple .

Key words

pragmatic knowledge ; content analysis ; College English textbook

Introduction

Language teaching has placed its focus on the facilitation of learners communicative competence . In the traditional approach to language teaching such as grammar translation , the acquisition of linguistic knowledge —vocabulary , pronunciation , and syntax —is emphasized . However , it is now reconsidered as only a partial account of the knowledge required to use a language . The knowledge of the rules of language use and communicatively appropriate performance (communicative competence) is now thought to be a large part of language learning (Schmidt & Richards 1980 :129) . Without good knowledge of the target language s rules of usage , language learners would have great difficulty in acquiring the appropriate ways to communicate language functions and may fail in interactive communications with the native speakers of the language unless they are well equipped with pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Park et al . 2000 :219) . One of the means assist the development of L2 learners pragmatic competence is textbook input (Bardovi -Harlig 2001) .

Textbooks , without question , are among the most important components of any educational system . Research in many countries and in different contexts has shown that textbooks have an important influence on teaching and learning (Altbach 1991 :237-254) . They play an important role in English Language Teaching (ELT) , particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom where it provides the primary (perhaps only) form of linguistic input (Kim & Hall 2002) .

Unfortunately , it is believed that pragmatic information , as one important aspect of language teaching , is missing in the College English textbooks in China , which inevitably overemphasizes the linguistic aspect . Little attention is given to the study of pragmatics (Kasper 1997 ; Vellenga 2004 ; Bardovi -Harlig 2001 ; Rose & Kasper 2001) , which is an equally , if not more , important aspect of language learning .

In the present study we argue that existing College English textbooks may , among other variables , play a role that may have contributed to the current status quo of College English education in China . An insufficient supply of knowledge of pedagogy and materials in College English textbooks may have led to difficulties in teaching and learning pragmatic knowledge effectively in the classroom . The study will

draw upon data from a content analysis of College English (New) Listening and Speaking textbooks in a detailed examination of the various essential elements evident or missing in the textbooks. The discussion of the data will be carried out with reference to research on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Pragmatics. The findings from this study will provide an empirical base upon which EFL College English pragmatic materials and tasks can be developed in textbook writing.

Previous studies

Some of the previous studies on second language pragmatics have focused on developing materials and tasks focusing on teaching and learning pragmatics in ESL/EFL context. The examined textbooks in these studies are written mainly for ESL and EFL learners by native English speakers. They are published in Britain, USA, Japan, and Korea, etc. and used by primary school students, high school students, and university students. The number of textbooks examined in the studies ranges from 4 to 23 (e.g. Schmidt 1994; Grant & Starks 2001). Content analysis is used in all the studies.

Generally speaking, the examined studies on pragmatics in ESL/EFL materials and tasks are concerned with authenticity in textbooks, speech acts in textbooks, pragmatic knowledge in textbooks, and effect of pragmatic input on learners' development of pragmatic competence. The results indicate that textbooks contain limited pragmatic information, and aspects such as metapragmatic explanation, explicit treatment of speech acts, and cultural information are particularly scarce (Boxer & Pickering 1995; Cane 1998; Park et al. 2000; Grant & Starks 2001; Vellenga 2004; and LoCastro 1997). Furthermore, presentation of speech acts in textbooks is simple and lack variety in terms of the types and vocabulary (Park et al. 2000; Boxer & Pickering 1995).

These empirical studies point to a need for more research on pragmatics in language materials and tasks for the different EFL context. Some questions remain: Do College English textbooks contain much pragmatic information that assists learners with their pragmatic competence? What's missing in College English textbooks for effective teaching? What kind of pragmatic information do textbooks entail? It is with this consideration in mind that we conducted the present research.

Method

A content analysis is conducted in order to explore the nature of pragmatic materials and tasks in the College English textbooks. It focuses on an analysis of the textbooks entitled College English (New) Listening and Speaking Course (Book 1-4) written by a group of Chinese English professors, published by Shanghai Foreign Education and Teaching Publishing House from 2001 to 2003. This series of textbooks is designed for juniors at university level. Book 1 represents the lowest level, whereas Book 4, the highest level.

The textbooks are examined for pragmatic information in the content quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data focuses on percentage and amount of pragmatic information contained in the textbooks and amount of variety of pragmatic information. Qualitative data concentrates on the nature of pragmatic information and the level of richness of pragmatic information. Pragmatic information is differentiated according to the categories on the basis of the frameworks adapted from the work of Vellenga (2004), Hatoss (2004) and Byram (1997). They are: general pragmatic information, metapragmatic information, metalanguage, speech acts, cultural information and pragmatically oriented tasks. The data is processed by using SPSS software and tabulated.

General pragmatic information encompasses a variety of topics related to politeness, appropriacy, formality, register and culture. Metapragmatic information includes discussion of politeness, register, illocutionary force, context, discourse, and appropriacy (Vellenga 2004). Metalanguage focuses on semantic usage, and collocation. Speech acts center on the explicit mention and metapragmatic description of speech acts. Cultural knowledge includes high culture, low culture, surface culture, and deep culture, and so on (Hatoss 2004). Page by page analysis of the 4 textbooks are performed in obtaining counts and descriptions of different types of pragmatic information.

Results

Comparison of the number of pages and units in each of the four College English Listening and

Speaking (L & S) Course textbooks shows that books are similar in terms of length and number of units . The overall structure of the four textbooks has been highlighted in the following table :

Table 1 . Pages and Units in Listening and Speaking Course textbooks

Text	Number of unit	Number of page	Mean
L & S Course Book 1	16	197	208
L & S Course Book 2	16	212	
L & S Course Book 3	16	208	
L & S Course Book 4	16	215	

As the textbooks are determined to be approximately equivalent in terms of length ,page by page analysis of the textbooks is performed to investigate the amount and nature of pragmatic information contained in the textbooks .

Any information relevant to general pragmatic information , metapragmatic information , metalanguage ,speech acts ,cultural information and pragmatically oriented tasks is coded as pragmatic information . A page including any of the above information ,whether it is one phrase or one line ,is counted as one page . Hence the percentages displayed below are highly inflated (Vellenga 2004) . Table 2 shows the distribution of pragmatic information tabulated by number of pages .

Table 2 . Pragmatic information in College English L & S Course textbooks (Books 1 4)

textbook	Pages which include pragmatic information	Total number of pages	Percentage of pages which include pragmatic information
L & S Course Book 1	58	197	29 .4 %
L & S Course Book 2	46	212	21 .7 %
L & S Course Book 3	5	208	2 .4 %
L & S Course Book 4	21	215	9 .8 %
Total	130	832	15 .6 %

As shown in Table 2 ,the average percentage of pragmatic information contained in the four Listening and Speaking textbooks is 15 .6 % . The distribution of pragmatic information in each Listening and Speaking textbook is not even . The percentages of pragmatic information contained in Book 1 (29 .4 %) and Book 2 (21 .7 %) are much higher than those in Book 3 (2 .4 %) and Book 4 (9 .8 %). Table 3 and Table 4 display more detailed descriptive statistics .

Table 3 . Descriptive Statistics on Amount of Pragmatic Information in College English L & S Course Textbooks (Book 1 4)

	Mean	Range	Min	Max	Standard deviation
Pragmatic pages	32 .5	53	5	58	20 .74
Total pages	208	18	197	215	13 .64
Pragmatic information	15 .83 %	27 %	2 .4 %	29 .4 %	19 .04 %

As shown in Table 3 ,the mean of the pragmatic pages in the four books is 32 .5 (SD =20 .74) . The highest score is 58 and the lowest score is 5 . As for the pragmatic information in the four books ,the mean score is 15 .83 %(SD =19 .04 %) . The highest percentage is 29 .4 % and the lowest percentage is 2 .4 % .

Pragmatic information is defined in a broad sense in the present study .It includes general pragmatic information , metapragmatic information , metalanguage , speech acts , cultural information and pragmatically oriented tasks . Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics on percentage of different types of pragmatic information contained in the four L & S textbooks .

Table 4 . Number of pages which include pragmatic information in terms of types of pragmatic information

	GP	MP	ML	Speech	Culture	Task	Total
BK1	6	15	2	13	4	18	58
BK2	7	9		24		6	46
BK3	5						5
BK4	4	4			6	7	21
total	22	28	2	37	10	31	130
percentage	16 .9 %	21 .5 %	1 .5 %	28 .5 %	7 .7 %	23 .8 %	100 %

As far as types of pragmatic information are concerned ,the percentages of three types of pragmatic information are above 20 % . They are :speech acts (28 .5 %) ,task (23 .8 %) ,and Metapragmatic information (21 .5 %) . Metalanguage and cultural information only account for 1 .5 % and 7 .7 % uspectively among all the pragmatic information contained in the four textbooks .

Discussion

Our analysis is quantitative on the one hand ,(that is ,accounting for the amount of pragmatic information included in the textbooks) ,and qualitative on the other (as we also considered the nature and level of richness of pragmatic information included in the textbooks) .

Findings of the textbook analysis show that College English Listening and Speaking Course textbooks include a paucity of pragmatic information as the average amount of pragmatic information across the four textbooks is small (15 .6 %) or 130 pages out of 832 pages (see Table 2) . This result confirms the findings of previous studies ,including Bardovi-Harlig et al . (1991) ,Boxer and Pickering (1995) ,Grant and Starks (2001) ,Vellenga (2004) . For example ,Bardovi-Harlig et al (1991) found that most of the dialogues in the examined textbooks aim at introducing a new grammatical structure rather than providing a source for realistic , natural , or even pragmatically appropriate conversational input to learners . Vellenga (2004) argued that there was a dearth of metalinguistic and metapragmatic information related to ways of speaking in the examined textbooks . It is obvious that College English L & S textbook writers haven t paid enough attention to developing learners pragmatic competence although textbooks have an important influence on learning and teaching (Altbach 1991) . This is particularly important in the Chinese EFL context as textbooks are one of the main resources for students to get pragmatic knowledge in College English classroom .

Language learning materials have a theory of language ,a theory of language learning ,and an educational philosophy explicitly or implicitly embedded in the discourse of the printed ,audio or video texts and ,moreover ,that these three components are interrelated (LoCastro 1997 :250) . The result of the present study indicates that the College English textbook writers haven t given enough attention to the application of pragmatic theory in their textbooks as pragmatic information contained in the four Listening and Speaking textbooks is not distributed evenly . The average percentage of Book 1 and Book 2 is 25 .5 % ,whereas the average percentage of Book 3 and Book 4 is 6 .1 % . Its also true with regard to types of pragmatic information . Speech acts account for 28 .5 % whereas Metalanguage only accounts for 1 .5 % . The striking differences in the amount of pragmatic information contained in each textbook and in the types of pragmatic information imply that textbook writers seem to have no guiding principle in writing their textbooks in terms of pragmatic information .

In fact pragmatics has been widely applied to the study of second language acquisition (Kasper & Rose 2002). An increasing body of research examines the development of L2 learners pragmatic ability (cf. review by Kasper and Schmidt 1996). As more and more attention is given to the development of pragmatic competence in English learning and teaching ,it is argued that textbook writers have the responsibility to incorporate more pragmatic information into textbooks because textbook writers play the role of teaching learners and training teachers (LoCastro 2003).

The findings also indicate that textbook writers have their own preferences to different types of pragmatic information as the amounts of types of pragmatic information are different (see Table 4). Speech acts (28 .5 %) and tasks (23 .8 %) are highlighted in Listening and Speaking textbooks when compared to the other types of pragmatic information . This result is in line with its writing principles . Listening and Speaking textbooks aim to develop students ability to speak English . Textbook writers not only provide pragmatic information but also design tasks to help learners practice and develop their pragmatic competence . It seems that Listening and Speaking textbook writers have incorporated a task - based teaching approach in materials development .

As also shown in the above table (Table 2), lower level textbooks contains more pragmatic information than the ones at a higher level . It seems that the lower the level the book is ,the more pragmatic information it has . Actually studies show that even gram matically advanced learners may use language inappropriately and show differences from target language pragmatic norms (Bardovi -Harlig 2001 ;Kasper 1997). It is necessary for textbook writers to provide pragmatic information in the textbooks at all levels . The descending tendency is not just a coincidence . A close look at the pragmatic information contained in each unit in the four textbooks demonstrates that whether pragmatic information is provided largely depends on the texts and writers own awareness of pragmatic knowledge . If the chosen texts contain pragmatic information writers think is important they will provide an explicit explanation . It seems that no guiding principles were used in the process of design and writing . Hence textbook writers failed to provide a set of texts that shows progression .

In addition to the quantitative analysis ,we also carried out a qualitative analysis of the nature and level of richness of the pragmatic information included in the textbooks . Two areas were selected for analysis :speech acts and pragmatically oriented tasks .

Speech act

Only Book 1 and Book 2 entail the information about speech acts which consists of explicit mention of speech acts and metapragmatic explanations about speech acts . Explicit treatment of speech acts in Book 1 and Book 2 is listed in Table 6 .

Table 6 . Explicit mention of speech acts in Listening and Speaking textbooks

Speech acts	Book 1 Listening and speaking	Book 2 Listening and speaking
Greetings	x	
Making introductions	x	
Opening a conversation	x	
Expressing likes /dislikes	x	
Controlling and changing a conversation	x	
telephoning	x	
Making apologies	x	
Accepting apologies	x	

Speech acts	Book 1 Listening and speaking	Book 2 Listening and speaking
Making reservations	x	
Making suggestions	x	
Expressing agreement /disagreement	x	
Inquiring about /responding to future activities		x
Expressing hope		x
Expressing certainty /uncertainty		x
Seeing the doctor		x
Giving compliments		x
Asking for permission		x
Giving permission		x
Ordering a meal at restaurant =having meals		x
Talking about preferences /one s occupation /accidents and disasters /famous people /unusual happening		x
Asking about people s opinion =showing attitude		x

Although the textbooks provide most of the common speech acts required in College English Curriculum Requirements published in 2004 ,generally speaking ,the treatment of speech acts in the textbooks is pragmatically inadequate . Students are only provided with a set of relevant expressions (sentences) about speech acts and some printed dialogues or examples with very little explicit metapragmatic discussion .

The metapragmatic information contained in the four textbooks include the general explanation for the functions of speech acts ,discussion of politeness (e. g. illocutionary force) ,conversation norms ,and context . Politeness is defined as situationally appropriate language (Thomas 1995) . Politeness carries a heavy burden in cross cultural communication in initiating and maintaining friendly relations between and among different individuals involved in the situations of contact (LoCastro 1997 :241) . As each speech act can be performed in different social contexts ,using different linguistic forms which may differ greatly in terms of illocutionary force ,with a lack of metapragmatic information ,puts learners ,particularly EFL learners with little target language exposure ,at a disadvantage in terms of acquiring pragmatic competence (Vellenga 2004) .

Before a speech act is introduced ,there is an introduction explaining the function of a speech act . For example ;before introducing how to get information ,the authors write :“ In everyday life we have to deal with many kinds of situations that require us to obtain information from others . Different ways can be used to ask for information from different people ”(Unit 6 ,Book 1 ,p . 51) . Introducing students to the semantic moves associated with a particular speech act in a certain context is pragmatically helpful (Vellenga 2004) . However ,the introduction is very general and no further details explaining the different situations ,different ways used by different people are provided . One of the possible reasons is that the non native speaker writers may have little knowledge of what is appropriate in certain situations (Vellenga 2004) .

Samples of language for speech acts are often provided with little further explanations . For example , samples of language for expressing disagreement are given without any mention to the significant

differences in utterances in terms of politeness in Unit 15 ,Book 1 (see figure 1 below).

- Expressing disagreement
- 1 . I wouldn't say so .
 - 2 . I couldn't agree with you less .
 - 3 . No way .
 - 4 . It's out of the question .
 - 5 . I'm not sure I can agree .
 - 6 . I couldn't disagree more .
 - 7 . Are you absolutely sure ?
 - 8 . I wonder if there's a mistake .

It's really necessary to provide students with multiple forms of expressions of a speech act . However that's not enough . Although all these utterances indicate disagreement ,they convey some differences in terms of formality and illocutionary force . Expressions such as “ No way ” is informal and direct whereas “ I wonder if there's a mistake ” is formal and indirect . If a student expresses his /her disagreement to the Dean of the department using “ No way ” ,it is likely to be viewed as impolite or even rude . But it would be appropriate if you use “ No way ” in a conversation with your intimate friend . Information about politeness and levels of politeness should be provided to students so that they can communicate successfully with people . Failure to notice these differences will result in inappropriacy of language use ,pragmatic tension ,failure or worse (Vellenga 2004) .

Discussion of illocutionary force focuses on inferences and listening strategies such as listening between the lines ,identifying speakers attitude ,detecting implied meanings ,etc . In Unit 3 ,Book 2 , there is a paragraph about how to listen between the lines :“ People do not always say directly what they mean . Very often ,we have to listen ‘ between the lines’ . The English language offers many ways for people to imply ,rather than directly state ,their meaning . To find out what a speaker really means ,we can rely on our understanding of the context ,the language (the meaning of an idiom ,for example) ,and the intonation used to help us .” This kind of metapragmatic information can help students develop their pragmatic competence .

Register discussions distinguish usage in written and spoken language . Written language is formal whereas spoken language is informal . In the written form of English ,formal language is preferred whereas informal colloquial language is preferred in the spoken form of English . Again take the above example ,the expression “ No way ” is informal and colloquial . The use of this expression is considered inappropriate if it is used in a formal written text ,but appropriate in informal speech .

Contextual information contributes to successful communication . Contextual variables include cultural factors ,power ,status ,age ,sex ,relationship between Speaker (S) and Hearer (H) ,etc . Decisions about the relative status of the speaker (S) and hearer (H) influence the degree of directness in the S's expressing disagreement (LoCastro 1997 :247) . Awareness of these contextual factors will facilitate students in using different expressions of speech acts more appropriately . In Unit 4 ,Book 2 ,a paragraph is written about the importance of identifying the relationship between the speakers in a conversation . It reads ,“ Identifying the relationship between the speakers in a conversation is an important skill in listening comprehension . Although sometimes the conversation itself does not contain words that say exactly what the relationship is ,we can rely on contextual clues to find it out . Such clues include the degree of intimacy (e. g. how intimately the speakers address each other ,what endearments are used) ,the degree of politeness (strangers tend to be more polite towards each other than friends or family members) ,and the particular situation (at a doctor's consulting room ,at a shop ,etc .)” (Unit 4 ,Book 2 ,p . 32) . This metapragmatic explanation will help students raise their awareness of contextual factors so that they can communicate with others successfully .

Apart from providing sets of expressions of speech acts ,textbooks also include some printed dialogues as samples for students to imitate . However the findings of analyzing the conversations provided in the textbooks indicate that most of the dialogues in the textbooks are not very authentic . Although they are appropriate for some students at certain stages of language learning ,they should be a more accurate

reflection of native speaker dialogues (Scotton & Bernstein 1988).

Take closings of conversations as in example. Conversation closings are a ritualistic form of behaviour used to maintain the positive face wants of the participants (Grant & Starks 2001). According to Schegloff & Sacks (1973), closings of conversations can be divided into "pre-closings" and a "terminal exchange". "Pre-closings" are introduced by fillers such as "well, so, and OK" and come in a variety of types. There are four types of pre-closings: those that make reference to the interests of the other speaker (e.g. "Well, I'll let you go."); those that involve explanations (e.g. "I've got to go."); those that make reference to the particulars of the conversation (e.g. "I'll let you go back to your programme."); and silence. Terminal exchanges include "OK", "See you", "Goodbye", "You are welcome" and the like (Grant & Starks 2001:40).

In the College English Listening and Speaking Course textbooks, the writers mentioned the term "closings of conversation" (Unit 2, Book 1, p.11), but didn't further explain the structures and features of conversation closings. Most of the conversations in the textbooks don't contain pre-closings. Some even don't have terminal exchanges. For example:

A: Good morning, Frank Qian's office.
 B: Good morning. Can I talk to Frank, please?
 A: Who's calling, please?
 B: Brian Tong from BS Toy Company.
 A: Well, Mr. Tong, I'm afraid Mr. Qian's not in the office at the moment. Can I take a message or would you like to ring him on his mobile phone?
 B: I'll try his mobile. Could you give me the number, please?
 A: 9093652781
 B: Just let me check that. 9093652781.
 A: That's it.
 B: Thank you.
 (Unit 5, Book 1, p.46)

This conversation ends with "Thank you" with no closings. It is not a pragmatically appropriate sample for students to learn. If students are taught to close a conversation with no closings, they "run the risk of ending the conversation inappropriately and appearing abrupt and bad-mannered" (Grant & Starks 2001:42).

Those which really have closings only provide simple terminal exchanges. For example:

A: Yeah, maybe. Who knows?
 B: Well, I have to run now. I have an appointment with the dean. See you.
 A: See you.
 (Unit 2, Book 1, p.17)
 A: Thank you. Bye.
 B: Good bye.
 (Unit 5, Book 1, p.47)

In fact, there are more types of closings in the natural conversations, such as "Catch you later", "Spot you", "See you whenever", "See you around". If writers provide them with good examples of appropriate pragmatic ways to end conversations, students can choose appropriate ways according to different contexts.

Tasks

Pragmatically oriented tasks contained in the College English Listening and Speaking textbooks are listening and speaking tasks. Listening tasks include filling in blanks, multiple choice questions, and answering questions. Speaking tasks consist of pair work, role play, and group discussion. The tasks in Book One and Book Two are mainly pair work. Students are asked to listen to the dialogue, repeat, and practice the dialogues with partners. For example, the following instructions can be found in each unit in Book One: "Listen to the dialogues and repeat after the recording. Practice the dialogues with your partner,

playing the role of A or B . Then work with your partner to create your own dialogues by replacing the underlined parts with your own words .” It seems that the essential purpose of this exercise is imitation . Students only need to imitate the dialogues with little consideration of context ,appropriacy ,etc .

In Book Two ,students are asked to make similar conversations according to the given situations after listening to the dialogues . The instructions go like this :“ Make similar conversations according to the given situations . Use the structures and expressions above in your conversations where appropriate .” Here imitation is not enough . Students have to consider the given situations and choose the appropriate expressions . Descriptions of situations include social relationships between interlocutors , status differences ,settings ,and other contextual factors . As metapragmatic information plays an important role in successful communication ,this kind of instruction helps students raise their awareness of context and appropriacy in making conversations ,hence facilitate students pragmatic competence . If textbook writers can provide more detailed information about context and appropriacy ,such as the usage of some expressions in certain contexts ,students will certainly benefit more .

Analyzing the tasks designed by the College English writers ,it is easy to find that these tasks are mainly designed to test whether learners can remember information or whether learners can explain ideas or concepts or whether learners can use the information in a new way . Such verbs can be seen in the directions of tasks . For example :find ,identify ,read ,name ,recite ,explain ,give examples ,retell ,interpret ,summarize ,and discuss . Doing these tasks only requires learners lower level thinking skills . According to the Revised Bloom s taxonomy ,thinking skills involve the lowest three levels (remembering ,understanding ,applying) and the highest three levels (analyzing ,evaluating ,creating) (see the following revised Bloom s Taxonomy) . The taxonomy is hierarchical as each level is subsumed by the higher levels . In other words ,a student functioning at the “ applying ” level has also mastered the material at the “remembering ” and “understanding ” levels ”(U W Teaching Academy ,2003) .

Figure 6 .3 The revised Bloom s Taxonomy

(Source :http://web.odu.edu/educ/lischult/blooms_taxonomy.htm)

Obviously the tasks the College English writers designed are superficial and belong to the first three levels . Although the importance of thinking for language learning has been recognized for some time (Waters 2006) ,the use of ELT activities which encourage active mental processing has still not become widespread in College English textbooks . One possible reason is that College English wrtiers have a little awareness about how level of thinking can be conceptualized in English teaching activities .

Whats more ,the content of these tasks focuses on information ,either learning information or understanding information ,such as cultural information and writing strategy information . Only discussion is an exception which belongs to applying level . Actually pragmatically oriented tasks should involve not only low level thinking skills but also higher levels of thinking ,such as Analysis level so as to help learners fully develop pragmatic competence (see 3 .1 .4) . As for content of tasks ,both pragmatic information and learning how to learn pragmatic knowledge are necessary .

Research has shown that tasks involving high level thinking skills can be designed to develop learners pragmatic competence . For example ,Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) conducted a pragmatic awareness activity in an ESL classroom in their study . With attempts to probe what learners notice about

pragmatically infelicitous utterances and how they repair them ,they asked learners to work in pairs to find out pragmatic infelicities in videotaped scenarios and performed short role plays to repair the infelicities they had identified . This pragmatically oriented task belongs to analysing level which requires higher level of thinking . The result shows that learners know what to change in terms of speech act , formula ,content and form ,but as for how to change ,it seems more difficult ,especially in the area of content and form .It concluded that classroom activities raising L2 pragmatic awareness provide learners with necessary information and choices to help them become competent users of the target language (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin 2005 :412). Besides ,as content may be moderated by learners cultural and personal orientation to speech events ,instruction would likely help learners .

Conclusions

The content analysis of four College English Listening and Speaking textbooks indicate that there is a paucity of pragmatic information contained in the textbooks . The textbook writers haven't given enough attention to the application of pragmatic theory in their textbooks as pragmatic information contained in the four Listening and Speaking textbooks is not distributed evenly . The variety of pragmatic information is limited . Most of the metapragmatic explanations are simple . Besides ,the textbook at a lower level contains more pragmatic information than the one at higher level .It may conclude that College English textbooks at the college level in China ,while starting to incorporate a dimension of the pragmatic competence ,are still confined to the explicit instruction of lexical ,syntactical and grammatical structures .

There is no doubt that effective teaching in Chinese EFL classroom can help develop students pragmatic knowledge .It is necessary for textbook writers to write user friendly textbooks in terms of providing pragmatic information to students and teachers . The Future EFL textbooks would include "presentation of a variety of linguistic forms along with explicit metapragmatic explanations and contextually rich opportunities for students to practice those forms " (Vellenga 2004 :23). Textbook developers should also take into consideration procedures of teaching ,selection of authentic materials and designing of tasks . More importantly ,there is a high expectation for aspiring College English textbook writers and teachers to better their own knowledge of pragmatics and pedagogy for optimal students learning outcomes . As the current research is based on a content analysis of four textbooks ,the findings are not conclusive enough to make a broad generalization . Further research is needed to investigate how College English teachers develop students pragmatic competence in the process of classroom instruction by using different approaches .

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Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in interaction and other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, linguistics and anthropology. Unlike semantics, which examines meaning that is conventional or "coded" in a given language, pragmatics studies how the transmission of meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge