


THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH
IN COLLEGE ORAL ENGLISH CLASS

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IN COLLEGE ORAL ENGLISH CLASS

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Abstract

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Under the Supervision of Daniel Leitch, PhD

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach originated from the changes in the British Situational Language Teaching method dating from the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), which emphasizes that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence. In recent decades, CLT has been accepted widely by most teachers as a prominent teaching approach in second language learning. This literature review examines the application of CLT in oral English class. The paper elaborates the theoretical basis of communicative language teaching from the historical perspective, and proposes a set of principles of CLT in oral English classes, including how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities best facilitating learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

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Chapter I Introduction

Communicative competence has aroused more attention in the world since proposed in the last three decades. It has been challenged and redefined by many linguists. In 1996, Bachman and Palmer proposed a much more comprehensive model of it, more precisely, the model of developing language ability in second language learning. Having “communicative language ability” means that the student can use the knowledge in actual communication. This theory aroused much attention in the field of foreign language learning and is now accepted by most teachers worldwide. Also, in China, the communicative approach has become prevalent and plays a very important role in oral English teaching. There is, of course, a concern with how to apply communicative language teaching in oral English class to improve the students’ proficiencies of spoken English.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed is, “how to apply the communicative approach to improve the college students’ oral English?” During more than six years of learning English before entering college, much more focus has been put on rote learning and accumulation of knowledge, such as vocabulary and grammatical rules. Some problems of “low efficiency” are very evident, which gains increasing attention.

Definition of Terms

Communicative competence: After Chomsky proposed and defined the concept of competence and performance, Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence fully, clearly and explicitly, which not only means an inherent grammatical competence but also means the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations. It is believed to be a broader and more realistic notion of competence brings the sociolinguistic perspective into

Chomsky's linguistic view of competence. Based on theoretical framework proposed by Canal and Swain, Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) proposed a much more comprehensive model of communicative competence, more precisely, the model of communicative language ability in second language learning.

Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT): With the goal to develop learners' communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) is proposed. From Howaah, "The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years. Stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching....." (1984p.279)

Purpose of the Study

This paper is a report on the literature as well as practical university teaching experience in how to use oral English teaching in university to propose the problems expected to be solved by applying the communicative approach. Some problems are listed as examples: the role of teachers and students, the requirements for teachers in a communicative class, how to organize some activities, how to motivate students to participate in the class as well as other similar topics.

Significance of the Study

In recent decades, CLT has been accepted widely by most teachers as a prominent teaching approach in second language learning. This paper examines the application of CLT in oral English class. It elaborates the theoretical basis of communicative language teaching

from the historical perspective, and proposes a set of principles of CLT in oral English classes, including how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities best facilitating learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. By clarifying the effectiveness of applying communicative approach in college oral English classes, it is very significant for both second language teachers and learners.

Delimitation of the Study

The research was conducted in and through the Library at the Wuhan Polytechnic University, over ninety (90) days. Primary searches conducted through the Internet using EBSCO host with ERIC, Academic Search Elite and Google/Google Scholar as the primary sources. Key search topics included “gender influence”, “learning strategy”, and “ESL”.

Methodology

A brief review of literature on the studies of communicative language teaching approach will be conducted. A second review of literature on the application of CLT in oral English class will be conducted. The research project will be conducted in the later three months and findings and the effects will be summarized and recommendations made.

Chapter II Review of Literature

In 1996, Bachman and Palmer proposed a much more comprehensive model of communicative competence, more precisely, the model of developing communicative language ability in second language learning. Having “communicative language ability” means that the student can use the knowledge in actual communication. This theory aroused much attention in the field of foreign language learning and is now accepted by most teachers worldwide. Also, in China, the communicative approach has become prevalent and plays a very important role in oral English teaching. This literature review considers how to apply communicative language teaching in oral English class to improve the students’ proficiencies of spoken English. This topic includes responses to the following questions:

1. What is the theoretical basis of communicative language teaching?
2. What is the concept of Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)?
3. How Does CLT Explain How Second-Language Learners Learn to Speak?

Although some application problems exist, the literature suggests that communicative approach is the most significant method to improve college students’ language ability.

What Is Theoretical Basis of Communicative Language Teaching?

The Concept of Communicative Competence

As the linguist Noam Chomsky (1965) wrote in his influential book, “*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*”- there is a classic distinction between competence and performance. Soon after Chomsky proposed the linguistic competence model, there was a strong disapproval especially in applied linguistics, criticizing and challenging the idea of using the concept of idealized, purely linguistic competence as a theoretical ground of the methodology for learning, teaching and testing languages. After Campbell and Wales (1970) used the term “communicative

competence” in their article "The Study of Language Acquisition",- Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence fully, clearly and explicitly, which not only means an inherent grammatical competence but also means the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations. It is believed to be a broader and more realistic notion of competence bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence.

Savignon (1972, 1983) described communicative competence as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting - that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors"(Savignon, 1972). The emphasis given was on the aspect of an individual's ability. In her opinion, competence can be observed, developed, maintained and evaluated only through performance. Savignon equates communicative competence with language proficiency.

Following Savignon Taylor (1988) proposed the term "communicative proficiency", Bachman (1990) suggested using the term "communicative language ability", which is defined as a concept comprised of knowledge or competence and capacity for appropriate use of knowledge in a contextual communicative language use. Bachman paid much special attention to the purpose of achieving a particular goal in a specific situational context of communication.

Models of communicative competence

There are three basic models of communicative competence: the model of Canale and Swain, the model of Bachman and Palmer and the description of components of communicative language competence in the Common European Framework (CEF).

In the model of Canale and Swain (1980, 1981), there are four main components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and Strategic

competence.

Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) proposed a much more comprehensive model of communicative competence. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), the most important characteristic of their language ability is comprised of two broad areas --- language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge consists of two main components --- organizational knowledge (the ability of a control over formal language structures, i.e. of grammatical and textual knowledge) and pragmatic knowledge (the abilities for creating and interpreting discourse).

The last model is the model of communicative language competence in the CEF (2001). It includes three basic components -- language competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence.

What is Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)?

The notion of Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

With the goal to develop learners' communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) is proposed. Gradually replacing the previous grammar-translation method and audio-lingual method, communicative language method evolves as a prominent language teaching method with an emphasis on meaning and communication.

Another scholar, Howat (1989), there are "strong" and "weak" notions of Communicative Language Teaching:

There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years. Stresses the importance of providing learners with

opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching..... The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it.'(p.279)

Distinguishing features and learning principles of CLT:

Reviewing a number of people's works on CLT, Richards and Rodgers (2001) described several distinct features of it, such as: dialogues, if used, centre around communicative functions and not normally memorized; and contextualization is basic premise; language learning is learning to communicate; effective communication is sought; drilling may occur, but peripherally; comprehensible pronunciation is sought; any device that helps to communicate and understand is acceptable; the attempt to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning; the target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate; communicative competence is the desired goal. (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983, cited by Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.156).

In socio-cognitive perspectives, language is for conveying meaning, and knowledge is transmitted through communication involving two parts, such as, speakers and listeners, or writers and readers. Consequently, from the practices of CLT, there are three elements in the underlying learning theory. The first is communication principle: Activities that involve real communication promote learning. Second is task-based principle: Activities in which language is

used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning. And the third is meaningfulness principle: Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.161). Besides the above features, Richards and Rodgers (2001) describe other significant characteristics of this approach including its efforts to make tasks and language relevant to a target group of learners through an analysis of genuine, realistic situations, its emphasis on the use of authentic, from-life materials, and its attempt to create a secure, nonthreatening atmosphere.

“With interactive communicative language use as the call of the day, communicative processes became as important as linguistic product, and instruction became more learner-centred and less structurally driven” (Kern & Warschauer, 2000, p.5). Another dimension of CLT is learner-centred and experience-based. That is to say, learners are active participants, rather than passive recipients of information provided by the teacher or the textbook. In contrast, teachers are no longer viewed as the authority of the knowledge, playing a dominant role. They share different roles such as communication facilitator, independent participant, needs analyst, counsellor, and group process manager (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.167) to create more interactive and fascinating learning circumstances.

How Does CLT Explain How Second-Language Learners Learn to Speak?

CLT Theory of Speaking

As Bygate (1987) noted, there are two aspects to be considered in a communication --- knowledge of the language, and skill in using this language. According to Bygate (1987, 4), speaking skills comprise two components: production skills of speaking and interaction skills of understanding.

There are four ways to facilitate speech production: "(A) by simplifying structures. (B)

By ellipsis, this is the omission of parts of a sentence. (C) By using formulaic expressions, these are the well-known colloquial or idiomatic expressions. (D) By the use of fillers and hesitation devices, these tend to give more time to the speaker to formulate what he/she wants to say" (Bygate, 1987, p. 15).

Interaction skill involves two different participants: the speakers and the listeners who should be 'good communicators' (Bygate, 1987, 22). It means the two participants need to understand the meaning of the messages that are being sent to achieve the goal of communication. Communication of meaning depends on two kinds of skills: routines and negotiation skills.

Routines are the typical patterns of conversations, involving two kinds: information routines and interaction routines. The information routines include some information structures, such as stories, descriptions, comparisons, or instructions. While, negotiation skills are used to solve communication problems and to enable the speaker and listener to make themselves understood. It is achieved by two aspects: management of interaction and negotiation of meaning which refers to 'the skill of communicating ideas clearly and signaling understanding or misunderstanding during a conversation'(p.27).

Strategies in the learning of ESL/EFL oral English

McDonough (1995) discussed the strategies in learning oral English by tracing back to the studies from the 1970s to the 1980s. One of the strategies he describes in detail is termed as achievement strategy:

- (a) code-switching
- (b) inter-lingual transfer
- (c) inter/intra-lingual transfer

- (d) inter-language: generalization, paraphrase, word coinage
- (e) co-operation: meta-linguistic communication and appeals for assistance
- (f) non-linguistic: mime, gesture, etc.

Summary

To sum up, Communicative Language Approach (CLA) is an approach to Foreign Language (FL) or Second Language (SL) teaching which emphasizes that the ultimate goal of language learning is communicative competence. The approach also advocates the application of authentic teaching materials, learner-centeredness, the carrying out of information-gap activities, effective feedback from teachers and students, etc.

With the communicative competence as its final goal, CLA is feasible in cultivating college students' communicative competence, which is a prerequisite to become an excellent English speaker. According to the theoretical foundation of CLA and the principles of teaching spoken English, some typical communication activities can be derived. Through the organization of communication activities, it is thought that students can be motivated and develop greater competence in the use of English for communication.

Chapter III The Application of CLT in College Oral English Classes

As regard to speaking, it is an essential part of teaching to offer opportunities to learners for improving their productive skills. It is also important for teachers to know oral production should be taught following the principles of communicative language teaching, with the primary focus on activities that aim at overcoming an information gap and developing the social meanings of the language.

Communicative Language Teaching and Speaking Activities

In relation to communicative language teaching, Revell (1991) reminds that "theories of communicative competence imply that teachers must do more than just supply learners with a number of language structures to manipulate" and suggests that it is necessary to make a link between "linguistic competence" and "communicative competence"(p.5.)

Meanwhile, William Littlewood (1991,8) proposes a solution to bridge the gap demanded by Revell by categorizing activities into two groups: pre-communicative activities, and communicative activities.

As Littlewood suggests, pre-communicative activities aim to "help the learners to develop links with meanings that will later enable them to use this language for communicative purposes"(p.8). Pre-communicative activities are divided into two subcategories: 'structural activities', such as mechanical drills or verb paradigms; and, 'quasi-communicative activities', such as question-and-answer activities (Littlewood 1991, 9-14).

Communicative activities are also divided into two further categories: "Functional activities" and "social interaction activities". Functional communication activities aim at practicing students' ability to get meaning across as effectively as possible. Social interaction activities, as well as overcoming an information gap or solving a problem, extend the social

meanings of the language through, for example, simulation and role-play activities, discussions or conversations. Also, it is to develop social acceptability in the language use. (Littlewood 1991, 16-36).

Besides considering organizational forms which focus either on accuracy or fluency of the language, teacher or learner centeredness should be taken into consideration. For teachers, whole-class activities focusing on accuracy of language involve making drills and controlled conversations, while fluency activities give students space for conversations, discussions or story-telling. For learners, focusing on accuracy, pair-work or group work activities involve role-plays, controlled conversations or working with questionnaires, while fluency activities make use of project work, various games, and discussions within groups or pairs. (Byrne 1991, 10-12)

1. organizational forms

Both kinds of activities will be connected with the use of different organizational forms. There are three most commonly used organizational forms that methodologists describe---group-work, pair-work, and whole-class teaching.

According to Richards and Lochhart (1999), whole-class teaching most usually includes ‘frontal teaching method’. Richards and Lockhart define whole-class teaching as follows:

The teacher leads the whole class through a learning task. For example, the teacher conducts a class discussion of an article from a newspaper, asking questions about it and eliciting comments around the class. (Richards and Lockhart 1999, pp.146-147)

Adrian Doff (1991) describes group-work as follows:

“In group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group). As in pair work, all the groups work at the

same time”.(Doff 1991, 138).

Richard and Lockhart (1999, p.153) say that group-work is likely to increase the amount of student participation in the class and promote collaboration among learners; furthermore, learners are given a more active role in learning, teacher’s dominance over the class decreases, while the opportunities for individual student practice of new features of the target language increase.

Byrne (1991) divides pair-work into three kinds: “open pairs”, “fixed pairs”, and “flexible pairs”. In “open” pairwork, learners talk to one another across the class under the teacher’s control. While in “fixed pairs”, learners work with the same partner to complete a task, such as dialogue. In “flexible pairs”, learners can change their partners, such as interviewing other classmates.

2. Principles of CLT for organizing activities

The role of teacher.

Of the characteristics of CLT, fluency takes on more importance than accuracy. Much more focus should be put on fluency speaking activities in the oral English class with communicative teaching approach.

In relation to fluency speaking activities, Harmer (2001, p275-276) mentions three basic roles that teachers take on including: prompter, participant, and feedback provider.

As the role of prompter, the teacher offers discrete suggestions or lets students struggle out of a difficult situation, which can stop the sense of frustration when coming to a “dead end” of language ideas. As a participant, a teacher prompts covertly, introduces new information to help the activity along, ensures continuing students’ engagement, and generally maintains a creative atmosphere. Finally, feedback provider, Harmer says, may inhibit students and take the

communicativeness out of the activity by over-correction; therefore, the correction should be helpful and gentle getting students out of difficult misunderstanding and hesitations.

Task-based.

Task-based language teaching emphasizes the construction, sequencing, and evaluation of particular goal-related action complexes that learners carry out either by themselves or jointly (Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Nunan, 1989). A task-based approach sees the language process as one of learning through doing---it is primarily engaging that the learner's system is encouraged to develop. It aims at providing opportunities for the learners to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities which are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

Task-based approach observes the following principles:

(1) The authenticity principle

The linguistic data that learners work with are authentic.

(2) The task dependency principle

A series of tasks in a lesson or unit of work forms a kind of pedagogical ladder, each task representing a rung on the ladder, enabling the learner to reach higher and higher levels of communicative performance.

(3) Learning by doing

Learning by doing motivates students to fulfill their potential. Learners master the language by using it communicatively in the classroom.

Providing feedback

Feedback on form represents focusing on the accuracy of spoken production including decisions about "whether learner's errors should be corrected, which kinds of learner errors

should be corrected, and how learner errors should be corrected” (p.189). Richards and Lockhart provide different ways for accomplishing feedback in form:

- Asking the student to repeat what he or she said;
- Pointing out the error and asking the student to self-correct
- Commanding on an error and explaining why it is wrong, without having the student repeat the correct form;
- Asking another student to correct the error;
- Using a gesture to indicate that an error has been made.

(Richards and Lockhart 1999, p190)

For the feedback provided during fluency work, according to Harmer (2001, p.105), it is important that the teacher does not interrupt in ‘mid-flow’, since it interrupts the communication and drags an activity back to the study of language form or precise meaning. He suggests the techniques for correcting students include gentle correction, such as prompting students forward, reformulating what a student has said, and recording mistakes with further analysis.

The use of mother tongue

During an oral fluency activity, the use of mother tongue other than English makes the activity pointless, therefore it should be a teacher’s duty to try and insist on the use of the target language. (Harmer 2002, p.132) Teachers are a principal source of comprehensible input playing an important part in language acquisition; therefore, the teacher should speak in target language as much as possible in the class.

In order to avoid students using their mother tongue, Hamer (2001) suggests several actions to promote the use of the target language. Firstly, the teacher needs to “set clear guidelines” that when mother tongue is permissible and when it is not. Secondly, “choose appropriate tasks”,

which students are capable of doing in the target language. Furthermore, it is important to create an English atmosphere. As Harmer suggests giving students names in the target language and making English the classroom language as well as the language to be learnt. Using friendly encouragement persuasion might also play its role, such as going around to students and saying things like: ‘Please, speak English! Stop using Chinese, and similar commands/requests.’

3. Activity-ending stage

There are two focuses in the last stage of an activity: how to stop the activity and how to provide feedback after the activity.

Stopping the activity:

Before the process is brought to end, some pairs and groups may complete earlier than others. It is vital to prepare some extra work to make the students not just left to do nothing. For example, a further elaboration of the task, getting students to read some demonstrations in their text-books, or asking students to get on with their homework. (Ur, 1996, p22)

On one hand, the accuracy work should have the appropriate length of the activity from three to five minutes. (Byrne, 1991) On the other hand, stopping the fluency work depends on the allocated time by teachers. It is not advisable to let the activities of both accuracy and fluency work drag on or make students bored.

Accordingly, it is up to the teacher to be flexible and rely on common sense of ending an activity. In my class, I prefer to give a time limit for an activity before starting it and get some preparation of extra work to make students busy not interrupting others.

Feedback after the activity:

Gower *at al.* (1995, p63) advised that “positive feedback” should be provided, i.e. positive points to comment on, such as successful communication, accurate use of grammar points, use of

vocabulary, appropriate expressions, good pronunciation, or expressive intonation, good use of fluency strategies in conversation, etc.

It is essential for teachers to put some recorded mistakes on the board, ask students to recognize the problems and put them right should follow. It is not necessary to say which student made the mistake or error. What is more important is to focus on common ones or ones in general interest and to provide students with individual notes and instructions on how to correct them or where to find them. (Harmer, 2001)

There are different ways to provide feedback. First, the feedback on the result can be provided by giving the correct results, getting groups to assess their own success, trying to collate proposals and versions of outcomes, or comparing or displaying conclusions. Second, the feedback on process can be provided in the performance of debate, interviews and other teacher-centered approaches. Finally, what is used rightly and what needs correction and practice should be monitored by the feedback on the language. (Ur 1991)

On the whole, in order to motivate students to communicate positive feedbacks are necessary. Also, it is important to point out what went wrong during the activity to bring out the improvement.

Chapter IV An Empirical Study on The Application of CLA in College Oral English Class

1. Research Questions

The empirical study is expected to enlighten oral English teachers on how to improve students' communicative competence and what kind of communicative activities are students' favorite conducting in further oral English teaching. Pre-experiment oral production tests and a post-experiment questionnaire are conducted

2. Subject

Twenty eight students in one class majoring in Civil Engineering were chosen as the subjects of the empirical study. The students are freshmen who come from different provinces of China in the two classes randomly. Their spoken English is at the lower intermediate level. Bothe classes were taught with the same textbook "College Oral English-Step by Step" Book 1 and have oral classes once two weeks.

3. Method and Procedure

Communicative Approach was adopted in the experimental class in oral English class for a semester. Some speaking activities related to the topic in each unit are organized based on the principles of CLT, such as presentation, discussion, conversation, story construction, and role-play etc. At the end of each activity, the teacher evaluates students' performance by giving the positive feedback for the further development.

The Pre-experiment Oral Production Test

In order to attain the first-hand data about the students' ability of spoken English, an oral production test was conducted in the experimental class. These 28 students were divided into 5 groups randomly. Students in each group are required to express and exchanger their own views towards certain issue as shown in Appendix.

Two evaluators should give each student a score respectively based on the same rating scale as following. The mean of the two scores will be calculated as the final mark to indicate the students' overall spoken ability.

score	Accuracy and Range	Size and Discourse Management	Flexibility and Appropriateness
4.5-5	Basically correct use of grammatical and lexical items. Adequate vocabulary and a fair range of grammatical structures for the given topic or task. Fairly good pronunciation.	The ability to produce extended and fairly coherent discourses concerning the given task, though with occasional pauses due to loss of words	Describe the pictures naturally and clearly. Use of language generally appropriate to the context, function and intention.
3.5- 4	Mistakes in the use of grammatical/lexical items that do not seriously interfere with communication are permissible. A basically satisfactory range of vocabulary to deal with the given task. Acceptable pronunciation.	Manifestations of ability to produce coherent and more complex utterances, though most contributions are short. Frequent pauses while organizing thoughts and searching for words, which sometimes interfere with communication.	Sometimes describe the pictures not to the point or not so cooperated with the interlocutors. Use of language basically appropriate to context, function and intention.
2.5-3	The use of grammatical/lexical items may be incorrect and sometimes impede communication. A minimum range of vocabulary and grammatical structures to cope with given task. Pronunciation may be faulty and sometimes impede communication.	Mainly short utterances. Long and frequent pauses while organizing thoughts and searching for words, which often interfere with communication, though basically fulfilling the given task.	The expression is not so clear , and occasional failure to adapt to new topics or changes of direction.
1.5- 2	Unintelligibility caused by grammatical errors. Insufficient grammatical/lexical items to cope with the given task. Poor pronunciation that causes breakdowns in communication.	Short utterances and disconnected speech, which is difficult to follow, making communication almost impossible.	The expression is very arduous. Inability to express own views flexibly and appropriately.
0.5-1	No evidence of knowledge of vocabulary, i.e inadequate words even for simple speech.	No evidence of knowledge of specific discourse devices.	No evidence of knowledge of appropriateness in certain context.

The Post-experiment Oral Production Test

After a semester of the adoption of CLA, a similar oral production test was conducted in the experimental class. Students were divided into 5 groups randomly, and the same list of topics

was chosen to be discussed. The same two interlocutors in pre-experiment test were required to evaluate the students' performance by the same rating scale as mentioned above.

Questionnaire:

A questionnaire (Appendix) was carried out in the class at the end of the semester. After one semester of the adoption of CLA, students might have some personal feelings and attitudes towards the application of CLA in college oral English class. By the questionnaire, the popularity and necessity of CLA in teaching oral English in the future will be justified.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Scores in the two oral production tests were collected and the raw data was processed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 12.0). A comparison was conducted between the pre- and post-experiment oral test in the experimental class shown in the following table:

Table 4.1

	N	Mean	S.D	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-experiment	28	2.3620	.80132	19	.000
Post-experiment	28	3.4152	.60012	19	.000

It is clearly shown in the table that the mean score changes from 2.3620 to 3.4152, which indicates an obvious improvement in students' oral proficiency in general. It apparently symbolizes the effectiveness and feasibility of CLA in oral English teaching.

Additionally, the results in the questionnaire were shown in the following table:

Table 4.2: the percentage of each choice chosen in each question

percentage choice	a	b	c	d	e
	question				

Question 1	2	8	30	52	10
Question 2	28	40	10	15	17
Question 3	29	41	11	10	9
Question 4	31	39	5	5	20
Question 5	48	34	14	4	
Question 6	50	34	11	5	
Question 7	39	35	26		
Question 8	43	37	15	5	
Question 9	63	27	7	3	
Question 10	7	20	68	5	
Question 11	45	30	25		
Question 12	29	26	45		
Question 13	38	49	13		
Question 14	35	48	17		
Question 15	28	42	30		
Question 16	66	19	15		

This table inferred that 52% of the 28 students are not satisfactory with their English competence. 40% students find they are poor in oral English, while they believe communicative competence is the key and main purpose to learn English. 48% students think spoken English is vital, but 50% find it is difficult to learn. 39% of the students think that lack of practice and attention are the main causes for the deficiency of oral English. With the adoption of CLA in class more than half students think that they can participate in the class activities and have enough time to practice their oral English. 68% students prefer to practice their spoken English

by problem-solving in groups. 45% of the students think the center of the class should be themselves. In the warm-up stage, students like guessing games, next discussion. During the class, 49% students prefer the application of problem-solving activities, then role-play and last story construction. Among the after-class activity, 48% students like questionnaire, then interview and last text-telling. 42% of the students don't expect teacher's correction of every error during their communication. Finally, 66% of the students believe the CLA is an efficient approach to improve their oral English proficiency and hope for a continual experience of CLA in their class.

5. Findings and Discussion

Results of the Oral Production Test

A conclusion can be made that CLA has really improved students' oral ability as shown in the comparison of the results in pre- and post-experimental oral production tests. Accordingly, the implication of CLA in teaching college oral English is effective and beneficial as expected.

Almost every student is making progress in their oral proficiency as a whole compared with the first oral production test, even though they haven't become a fluent English speaker as required by the syllabus.

The following characteristics show that CLA Firstly, in the class with CLA, training of students' communicative ability is the focus. Secondly, the teaching goals are set to meet the needs of her students. Thirdly,

Chapter V Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, with the application of these most important principles for oral English teaching, teachers are able to help and encourage learners to be actively involved in constructing meaning in the learning process through assimilation and accommodation while students are doing the various oral activities, rather than passive receivers of the language as in the traditional classroom. This communicative approach creates an interactive environment for learners to do oral English practice and certainly improve the proficiency of learning and strengthen the learners' oral ability.

In Chapter Three, a variety of communication activities are explored in details and they can be a good reference for readers, especially for English teachers. Typical oral activities which are used in warning-up, during-class, and follow-up periods are recommended. Under the CLA, the teacher and the learners should identify themselves and play their own roles appropriately in English class.

Furthermore, an empirical study was carried out and the results show that CLA is applicable and is effective to improve students' oral ability. With the strengths of CLA, students' passion and motivation can be kindled as far as possible. Also, from the research, some suggestions to follow can be get in the future teaching: motivate students as much as possible; encourage students to communicate in English; prevent students from using their mother tongue; do not correct students' mistakes.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

交际法提高口语交际能力的调查问卷

各位同学：你们好！

我是武汉工业学院的大学英语教师，现在正在做一篇关于大学口语教学中应用交际法提高口语能力的论文，想了解你对英语口语课堂应用交际法教学的想法，希望能够得到你的合作。本问卷包括应用交际法之前的口语能力测试，和学生对交际法进行口语教学的想法。每一问题都没有标准答案，无对错与好坏之分，所收集的数据仅用于论文写作。本问卷为匿名调查，无需填写真实姓名。请务必根据自己的实际情况作答！

第一部分：口语能力测试 (Oral English test)

本部分要了解的是你目前的口语水平。

在以下 10 个话题中任选一个，以小组(5 人一组)为单位进行讨论，时间为 10 钟。

You are required to choose one of the following ten topics and discuss it in your group in 10 minutes.

1. Have you ever tried online shopping? Are you satisfied with that? Why or why not?
2. What is your favorite sport? Why do you like it?
3. How to live a healthy life physically and mentally?
4. Do you like music? What does music mean to you?
5. What's your favorite Chinese traditional festival? How it is celebrated? What you usually do on that day?
6. What do you think of Internet? Why?
7. In your opinion, which one comes first, love or career? Why?
8. Do you prefer living in city or in countryside? Why?
9. Do you like reading? Why or why not?
10. Which one is more important, competition or cooperation?

评分标准: (Ranking scale)

分数	内容	准确性	流畅性
4.5-5 分	描述具体、丰富，包含了表格要求描述得所有内容要点，能围绕内容适当发挥，有创意。	语音清晰、准确，语调正确、自然；语言结构正确；语言得体性好，合乎规范，语法基本没错误。	运用了较丰富的词汇，句子通顺，上下文意思连贯，表达清楚，语音和语流基本上没有错误。
3.5- 4 分	描述基本上包含了表格要求表达的内容，但内容简单平淡，欠创意。	语音基本准确，语调基本正确；语言结构基本正确；语言得体性较好，基本合乎规范（出现少许语法错误，但不影响理解）。	所运用的词汇基本上正确，句子较通顺，意思较清楚，有少量语言和语音错误，语流不大顺畅。
2.5-3 分	描述够全面（欠缺一个内容要点），词语数量不足 4~5 个句子）。	语音语调较差，有些影响理解；语言结构较简单；语言得体性较差，出现多处语法错误。	词语贫乏，上下文意思不够连贯，有较多的词语、语音和语流错误。
1.5- 2 分	描述过于简单（欠缺两个内容要点），词语过少（3 个句子以下）。	语音语调差，句子无条理，影响理解；语言结构错误较多；语言得体性差，出现较多的语法错误。	语言不规范，上下文意思不够连贯，语言和语流错误较多。

0.5-1	描述偏离表格要点(欠缺4个内容要点)。言而无物。	思维紊乱,语言错误很多,影响理解。	大多数句子词不达意(只说出一两句与题目要求有关的英语)。
0	考生一言不发,或只会说,“I don't know.”等与表格要求描述无关的英语句子。		

第二部分: 问卷调查 (Questionnaire)

本部分要了解的是你对目前英语口语教学的意见,你目前口语存在的问题,学习口语的目的,以及对口语课堂应用交际教学法的态度和看法。

- 你对自己的英语水平是否满意?
 - 很满意
 - 比较满意
 - 很一般
 - 不太满意
 - 很不满意
- 你认为自己英语最薄弱的环节是哪一项?
 - 听力
 - 口语
 - 阅读
 - 写作
 - 翻译
- 你日常生活中最常用到的英语技能是什么?
 - 听力
 - 口语
 - 阅读
 - 写作
 - 翻译
- 你学习英语最主要的目的是什么?
 - 拿学分
 - 通过四六级考试
 - 以后工作需要
 - 对英语的兴趣
 - 和其他人交流
- 你觉得口语重要吗?
 - 非常重要
 - 重要
 - 不是很重要
 - 不重要
- 你觉得口语难吗?
 - 非常难
 - 有点难
 - 不是很难
 - 很简单
- 你觉得口语难以掌握的主要原因是什么?
 - 缺少练习机会
 - 重视不够
 - 不敢张口说
- 你能积极参加课堂活动吗?
 - 很积极
 - 一般
 - 不太积极
 - 不积极
- 你觉得口语课堂上练习口语的时间足够吗?
 - 足够
 - 多
 - 不多
 - 太少
- 你希望在课堂上通过什么样的方式练习口语?
 - 老师讲技巧
 - 与老师对话
 - 和同学小组交际活动
 - 看视频录像
- 你认为在课堂谁应该是主角?
 - 老师
 - 学生
 - 老师和学生

12. 你喜欢下列课前热身活动中的哪一种? 为什么?

- a. 讨论 b. 口头陈述 c. 猜测游戏

原因: _____

13. 你喜欢下列课中交际活动中的哪一种? 为什么?

- a. 角色扮演 b. 解决问题的活动 c. 连环故事

原因: _____

14. 你喜欢下列课堂后续活动中的哪一种? 为什么?

- a. 采访 b. 问卷调查 c. 课文复述

原因: _____

15. 你喜欢老师在你说英语的时候把你的每个口语错误都指出来吗?

- a. 喜欢 b. 不太喜欢 c. 不喜欢

16. 你认为交际法能有效的提高口语吗?

- a. 能 b. 效果一般 c. 不能

Questionnaire

1. Are you satisfied with your oral English ability?

- a. very much b. yes c. just so so d. no e. completely no

2. Which one do you think most difficult?
 - a. listening comprehension
 - b. oral English
 - c. reading comprehension
 - d. writing
 - e. translation

3. Which one do you use most frequently?
 - a. listening comprehension
 - b. oral English
 - c. reading comprehension
 - d. writing
 - e. translation

4. What is your main purpose to learn English?
 - a. for credits
 - b. for CET4/6
 - c. for future job
 - d. my interest
 - e. for communication

5. Do you think oral English is important?
 - a. very
 - b. yes
 - c. not very
 - d. no

6. Do you think oral English is difficult to learn?
 - a. very
 - b. yes
 - c. not very
 - d. no

7. Why do you think it is difficult to speak English?
 - a. no chance to speak
 - b. put less focus
 - c. do not dare to speak

8. Can you participate in class activities actively?
 - a. very active
 - b. just so so
 - c. not active
 - d. completely not

9. Do you have enough time to practice your oral English in class?
 - a. enough
 - b. much
 - c. not much
 - d. few

10. Which way do you prefer to practice your oral English in class?
 - a. present skills by teacher
 - b. talk with teacher
 - c. communicative group work
 - d. video show

11. Who is the centre in the class?
 - a. teacher
 - b. students
 - c. teacher and students
12. which one is your favorite warm-up activity?
 - a. discussion
 - b. presentation
 - c. games

reason: _____

13. Which one is your favorite in-class activity?
 - a. role-play
 - b. problem-solution activity
 - c. story-telling

reason: _____

14. Which one is your favorite after-class activity?
 - a. interview
 - b. survey
 - c. text-retelling

reason: _____

15. Do you agree that teacher should correct every mistake during your speaking?

- a. yes b. no c. completely no

16. Do you think communicative teaching approach is efficient to improve your oral English?

- a. yes b. just so so c. no

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - PLATTEVILLE

1. Purpose: The purpose of this study is to draw from your own experience of oral English teaching in university to propose the problems expected to be solved by applying the communicative approach.

2. Procedure: You will be given a questionnaire to fill out and return. Your cumulative grade point average and ACT score will be confidentially obtained by and assigned a code. The student researchers will at no time see your name attached to your ACT score or grade point average.

3. Time Required: Participation is expected to take approximately 30 minutes.

4. Risks: There will be no immediate risks to participants other than the time and effort required to participate in the study. No long term risks are foreseen.

Benefits: Understanding which factors better predict academic success is of value to universities, instructors and students. For example, such information could help us better identify which students will need additional assistance during their college career.

5. Your rights as a participant: The information gathered in this study will be used in a confidential form.

Data or summarized results will not be released in any way that could identify you. If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without penalty or repercussions. The information collected from you up to that point would be destroyed if you so desire.

At the end of the study, participants will be given a debriefing detailing the exact purpose of the study. If you have any questions afterward, please ask or contact:

, Researcher: Wangwei , Wuhan Polytechnic University

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Tom LoGuidice,

School of Education

loguidit@uwplatt.edu

Once the study is completed, you may request a summary of the results by contacting the above Researcher or faculty sponsor.

6. If you have any questions about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write

Dr. Barbara Barnet, Institutional Review Board Chair

Name: Barnet, Barbara

Department: MATHEMATICS

Email: barnetb@uwplatt.edu

Phone Number: [608-342-1942](tel:608-342-1942)

Address: Gardner 435 ; 1 University Plaza

Platteville, WI 53818

Status: Faculty/Staff

I have read the above information and willingly consent to participate in this Classroom Teaching Project

Please print your full name (First, Middle, Last):

____ Wei Wang (Bessie)

Signature: Wei Wang (Bessie) __

Date: 10 April 2013

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

IRB HUMAN PARTICIPANTS RESEARCH REVIEW PROTOCOL: TEACHING IMPROVEMENT FORM

This protocol is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the IRB prior to the initiation of any investigation

involving human participants. **Approval is valid for one year unless otherwise noted.**

Indicate Status of Protocol: Original Submission Protocol Modification

Indicate Requested Review Level: Expedited

Submit original and two copies.

Principal Investigator(s)

Name(s): WangWei

Rank/Title(s): teacher

Department/Program(s): Wuhan Polytechnic University

Email: wangwei@uwplatt.edu; 20664332@qq.com

Sponsor(s) (if PI is a student)

Name(s): LoGuidice

Rank/Title(s): Professor Emeritus and assignment in China for School of Education 7000 Research Procedures in Education

Department/Program: SOE

Email: loguidit@uwplatt.edu

Project Title: The Application of communicative language teaching approach in oral English class

Start Date for Data Collection: 10 April.

End Date for Data Collection: 7th July

Is federal or other extramural funding being sought? Yes **No**

Name of potential supporting agency:

Assurance of Departmental/Program Review:

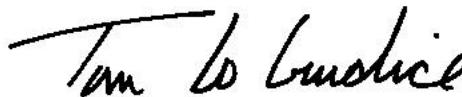
If a departmental/program HSR exists, the signature of the HSR Chair assures the IRB that the protocol has been approved and a copy is on file in the department. If no HSR exists, the signature of the Department Chair assures the IRB that s/he has been informed of the project and a copy is on file in the department.

Signature/Date: _____ / _____

Indicate Title: HSR Chair Department Chair

Assurance to IRB: I I/we have read the UW-Platteville IRB Manual of Policies and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants and will comply with the informed consent requirement and conditions. Further, I/wewill inform the IRB if significant changes are made in the proposed study.

Signature of PI(s)/Date: _____ **Wang Wei** _____ / **march 26, 2013**



Signature of Sponsor(s)/Date: _____ **March**
28,2013 _____ / _____

IRB USE ONLY

Date Received _____ Approval Date _____ Protocol # _____

Signed _____ Reapproval Date _____

Review Level: Full Board Expedited (Subcommittee): _____

2

Template for Teaching Improvement Projects*

Note: For detailed instructions, refer to pages 25-26 of the IRB Manual.

A. PERSONNEL:

Identify any personnel involved in your project who were not already identified on the cover page.

Also, indicate if and how they are affiliated with UWP (e.g., faculty member, graduate student). For those not affiliated with UWP, indicate their relevant affiliations (e.g., Platteville Public Schools, UWExtension).

B. RESEARCH QUESTION:

1. Describe your project and its overall goal(s). If a survey or questionnaire is used, please attach a copy.:

Problem statement: how to apply the CLT(communicative language teaching) in oral English class

2. What do you expect to find?

The effects of application of CLT in oral English class

3. Where might you present or publish your findings?

In a journal in china,an international journal and of course published as an electronic document through Karrmann Library

4. Will any formal papers or reports result from your project and with whom will they be shared?

YES. It will be shared with second language teachers and students.

C. PARTICIPANT SELECTION:

1. Number of participants: **60**

2. Human participant pool: **College Oral English**

a. Will all participants be members of the UWP student body? **No** Yes

If not, who will serve as your participants? **Students in Wuhan Polytechnic University**

b. Will all participants be at least 18 years of age? No* **Yes**

c. Will any participants come from protected groups (i.e., fetuses or people who are minors, prisoners, developmentally disabled, or psychologically impaired)? **No** Yes*

D. PROTECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR RIGHTS:

1. If your participants are students and will be given course credit for participating, is there an alternative option for earning that credit?

No Yes Not applicable

2. Is any of the information that you will be collecting of a confidential/protected nature?

(**Note:** If yes, describe that information in the space provided.)

No Yes

3. Would there be any negative effects for your participants (legal, financial, social, or personal) if the information contained in your data set or in your project files was somehow exposed to the public? (**Note:** If yes, describe that information in the space provided.)

No Yes

4. How will the information be recorded and/or secured so as to protect the participants' identities?

5. Informed consent:

a. If individually identifiable student grades, GPA, or other confidential/protected information provided by any source other than the respondent are part of your data set, then written/signed consent is required. Does your data set include student grades, GPA, or other confidential/protected information provided by any source other than the respondent?

No Yes

If yes to 5a, attach a copy of your written/signed consent form.

(See Appendix B, pages 27-31, of the IRB Manual for sample consent forms.)

b. If written/signed consent is not required, is informed consent still secured? **No** Yes

If yes to 5b, attach a copy of your informational/unsigned consent form.

(See Appendix B, pages 27-31, of the IRB Manual for sample consent forms.)

c. Under very rare circumstances the requirement for informed consent can be waived. (Convenience of the investigator is never sufficient reason.) If you believe informed consent should be waived for your project, write a justification for your recommendation based on the Federal criteria given in Section VII, page 15, of the IRB Manual. Realize that the IRB must agree with your recommendation before the requirement for informed consent is waived.

6. Are participants given any untruthful or misleading information? **No** Yes

If yes to 6, at what point are the participants debriefed? Explain the inaccurate information which was provided to the participants, and how your debriefing corrects the inaccurate information and explains why it was necessary.

7. Does the project present any more risk to participants than would normally be encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?

No Yes*

Notes: If you checked any of the response options marked with an asterisk (*), a standard protocol is automatically required for full board review. Further, depending on your responses to the preceding questions, it may be necessary for you to complete our standard protocol; we will contact you if that is necessary for your project.