

Research on Using Communicative Language Teaching Combined with Game-Based Learning to Improve English Communication Skills

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Abstract

With the pace of internationalization and the innovation and flip of multi-teaching, the cultivation of English communication skills is becoming more important. Therefore, General English plays a very important role, opening the door to international integration. The aim of this study was to improve the dullness and address the lack of active, innovative thinking in traditional English teaching, which leads to low motivation and willingness to learn, lack of concentration, and poor learning effectiveness. This project used communicative language teaching of curriculum design and game-based learning strategies as research topics to level up proficiency in English listening and speaking skills and self-confidence, enhancing students' communication and response skills. The course was designed to help students establish logical thinking and independent thinking ability. In addition, the game-based learning method was used to encourage students' interest in active learning. It developed the potential of both the left and right brains, focused on concentration, and promoted students' exploration of knowledge and creative thinking skills. To improve teaching methods through students' feedback and reflection and then achieve the goal of improving "English communication skills". The object of this study was the first-year students of the five-year junior college program in the Nursing Department, divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group adopted the "Communicative Language Teaching"

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strategy combined with “Game-based learning”, and the control group adopted traditional face-to-face teaching and group discussion. The research tool of this study used qualitative interviews and quantitative statistical analysis to explore whether it could effectively promote students’ English communication skills.

Keywords: Communicative language teaching, Game-based learning, English listening and speaking skills, English communication skills

Introduction

Communicative teaching effectively stimulated students’ willingness to engage in active learning and enhanced their English communication skills. Game-based learning methods were employed to develop logical thinking and the ability to think independently. Additionally, by integrating communicative teaching strategies with game-based learning methods, the study aimed to provide students with systematic, hierarchical, and comprehensive progressive learning. Through group discussions and peer interactions, lower-achieving students were also able to interact with their peers, thereby increasing their motivation to learn and promoting the improvement of their English communication skills.

Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the mainstream in English education, emphasizing the importance of interaction among peers with the aim of developing students’ communication skills. CLT emphasizes simultaneous learning and communication, viewing language acquisition as purposeful (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). It prioritizes authenticity in the classroom by simulating real-world contexts and meaningful tasks (Brown, 2001). The characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching include interaction, authentic language, two-way communication, learner-centered approaches, and task-based language learning (Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Brown, 2001).

Game-based Learning

Games are one of the most natural and effective ways of learning. Incorporating games into the curriculum enhances students’ motivation and willingness to actively participate, stimulating creativity and learning drive through diverse learning methods. Swiss psychologist Piaget (1936) believed that games have

dual functions: they promote the development of cognitive abilities and reflect cognitive development indicators through the form of play. Because games are fun and engaging, they are widely used in communicative teaching methods. Learning through play, and playing through learning, integrates games into the curriculum, creating a joyful learning atmosphere, activating both hemispheres of the brain, and stimulating students' boundless imagination and creativity, thereby enhancing communication skills (Piaget, 1936). Game-based learning involves using computers, smart devices, and online or tabletop games as mediums, allowing learners to face problems, overcome challenges, and achieve learning outcomes, gaining a sense of accomplishment. Prensky (2001) pointed out that game-based learning is a highly engaging and educational activity, characterized by playfulness, goal orientation, interactivity, competitiveness, challenge, problem-solving, and social interaction. Annetta (2008) advocated for integrating game-based learning into curriculum teaching, promoting interaction between teachers and students, providing learners with opportunities for thinking and exploration, helping them actively engage in activities, achieving personalized learning, and enhancing their English communication skills.

Research Methodology

Theoretical Framework

The main design basis of this research framework utilized “Communicative Language Teaching” and “Game-Based Learning” integrated into the English teaching curriculum. It developed students' English communication and expression skills, as well as their motivation and willingness to learn English, to enhance their communication abilities. The framework of this study was as follows:

Research Subjects and Setting

The research subjects were first-year students from the nursing department of Taiwan's five-year junior college program, consisting of approximately 100 students across two classes. The experimental group employed a teaching strategy combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with game-based learning. The control group utilized traditional face-to-face teaching and group discussions.

Research Methods and Tools

This study employed an experimental group and a control group for comparison. For quantitative analysis, pretests and posttests were conducted using the

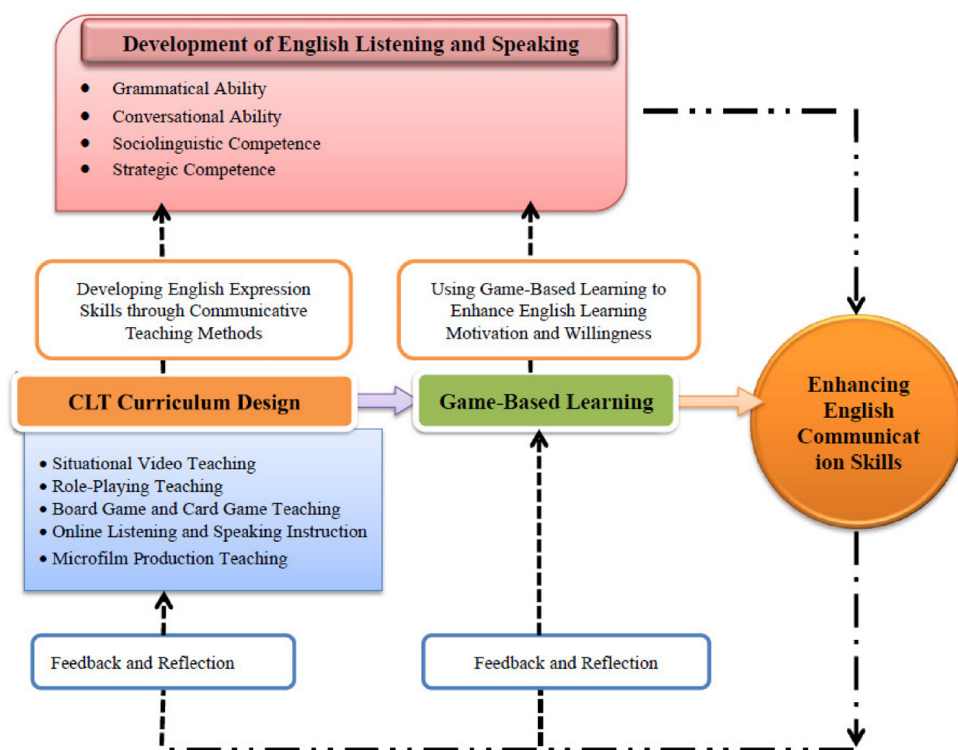


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of this study.

Student English Proficiency Self-Assessment Questionnaire, referencing and adopting the Self-Assessment Checklists for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (Orwig, 2014). For qualitative analysis, a random sample of 10 students was interviewed for analytical research.

Results

A one-way ANOVA comparison of students' pretest, posttest, and delayed scores showed a significant improvement in the scores of students who used the communicative language teaching method and game-based learning method. Students using traditional teaching methods showed some improvement in scores, but the difference was not significant, indicating a noticeable disparity in English learning effectiveness between the two groups. Independent sample t-tests revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in terms of learning effectiveness. Additionally, statistical results from student learning surveys demonstrated that over 80% of students had shown significant improvement in their listening, speaking, comprehension, and expression abilities.

There was a significant disparity in English listening and speaking learning effectiveness between the experimental group using Communicative Language Teaching and Game-Based Learning and the control group using traditional teaching methods. Students in the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvement in listening skills compared to their speaking abilities. In qualitative interviews, most students reported that the course incorporating Communicative Language Teaching and Game-Based Learning had effectively enhanced their English communication skills. They found the English lessons more engaging, which stimulated their willingness to actively participate in learning. This approach not only improved their English communication abilities but also boosted their confidence in using English in practical communication scenarios. The teacher's reflection highlighted that communicative teaching methods had enhanced students' English proficiency, while game-based learning had stimulated interest in active learning. Teaching methods were refined based on student feedback to better achieve the goal of enhancing students' English communication skills. Students' qualitative feedback showed overall satisfaction, noting that online games had made vocabulary review more enjoyable and improved word retention, while role-playing had helped them understand the flexible use of vocabulary and sentence structures. They appreciated the communicative approach in class for encouraging peer assistance and collaborative discussions, which contributed to improved English learning outcomes and enhanced English communication skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Through communicative teaching methods, students' English communication skills and confidence were significantly enhanced, along with improvements in their communication techniques and ability to respond effectively. This course design helped develop students' logical thinking and their ability to think independently. Employing game-based learning methods effectively stimulated students' interest in active learning, fostered their potential, enhanced concentration, and encouraged them to explore knowledge and engage in creative thinking. However, in terms of speaking proficiency, the effectiveness was less pronounced compared to the improvements in listening skills, primarily due to issues with oral pronunciation and insufficient practice time. To address these challenges, future teaching will continue to integrate speaking training courses with games, focusing on enhancing students' oral pronunciation. Effective pronunciation learning strategies will be employed to further strengthen speaking abilities.

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