



ON EFFECTIVENESS OF CBI IN IMPROVING MARITIME MAJOR STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND LEARNING MOTIVATION

Guo Yanling

Dalian Ocean University



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内 容 提 要

本书以中国东北一所海洋大学的调查为基础,结合国内外相关的理论与研究,通过实证研究对比 CBI(Content-Based Instruction)与传统教学法对于提高海洋专业学生英语应用能力的效果,旨在探究 CBI 对提高海洋专业学生英语应用能力的有效性,并力图构建一种 CBI 海洋专业大学英语教学新模式,发现 CBI 在海洋专业大学英语课堂以及其他学术英语领域的实施中应该注意的问题。本书能丰富外语教学理论并指导大学英语教学实践,可作为相关专业英语教师、大学生及英语爱好者的参考书。

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Guo Yanling 著

策划编辑 李春亮 责任编辑 谢卫奋 责任校对 徐春莲 封面设计 潘向蓁

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Preface

In the 1980s, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) was found to be an effective approach to teaching English as a foreign or second language because with CBI, students can gain the necessary content knowledge and academic skills in addition to the language itself. It is also believed that CBI can help enhance students' learning motivation and interest through content themes.

Up till now, in China, empirical studies on the learning effects of CBI to English learners are fewer in the field of College English teaching, let alone CBI on maritime major College English teaching. Based on the survey in Dalian Ocean University as well as the related theories and research at home and abroad, by comparing the effects of CBI and the traditional teaching method (TTM) on maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation, this monograph introduces the empirical study to find out the effectiveness of CBI in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation, and attempt to construct a new CBI maritime major College English teaching mode.

The 152 subjects in this study are maritime major students in Dalian Ocean University (DLOU). These subjects constituted the experimental group and the control group. Two English instructors cooperated in this study by practicing CBI in the experimental group and TTM in the control group.

Based on a 3-semester investigation of the above experimental group and control group, with the questionnaire, the pretest and posttests, classroom observations and the interview, this research has findings as follows: CBI is more effective in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation than TTM, and we can construct a new CBI maritime major College English teaching mode. In addition, the study attempts to find out what deserves our attention in the implementation of CBI in maritime major College English classes as well as in other academic English fields. The results of this research can enrich the theory of foreign languages and direct the practice of College English teaching.

List of Abbreviations

AMTB	Attitudinal Motivation Test Battery
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
BIMC	Baltic and International Maritime Council
CAD	Computer-Aided Instruction
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CBI	Content-Based Instruction
CCEE	China College Entrance Examination
CET – 4	College English Test Four
CET – 6	College English Test Six
CL	Cooperative Learning
CLL	Cooperative Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DLOU	Dalian Ocean University
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
EL	Ecological Linguistics
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GE	General English
IL	Inter-Language
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISF	Importer Security Filing
KF	Knowledge Framework
KS	Knowledge Structures
LAC	Language Across the Curriculum
LMT	Learning Motivation Theory
LSP	Language for Specific Purposes
L2	Learning of Second Language

ME	Maritime English
MET	Marine Engineering Technology
MLT	Meaningful Learning Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistics Package for the Social Science
STCW	Standards of Training Certification and Watch-keeping
TTM	Traditional Teaching Method
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A review of the research literature demonstrates that there are fewer empirical studies on the effects of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in the field of maritime major College English teaching in China. This study attempts to fill in this gap by exploring the effectiveness of CBI in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation, with a particular focus on constructing a new CBI maritime major College English teaching mode. This chapter first describes the researcher's personal motivation for carrying out this research study. Then, this chapter describes the background of the study, including English language teaching abroad and English language teaching in China as well as the challenge to maritime major College English teaching in China. Next, the scope, aim and significance of the study are expounded in this chapter. Finally, this chapter outlines the overall structure of the thesis.

1.2 Personal Motivation

This study originates from my personal teaching experience in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the higher institution. I've been teaching College English for more than ten years and I show my great interest in the reform of College English teaching mode. Since 2003, I've been in charge of a series of College English reform programs of different levels with the main purpose of cultivating and enhancing the students' English comprehensive abilities. But as the reform went further, I found the students' English practical abilities are limited to simple communication and they cannot carry on the topic related to their major because of poor vocabulary range. My interest grew further in looking for a more effective teaching mode to improve students' English proficiency and learning motivation. I engaged in the whole process of the innovation when I found CBI applied in ELT in western countries.

In the 1980s, content-based English instruction has been developed from the teaching methodology of Canadian French Immersion programs. Second language learning can be effective when the process becomes a vehicle combining language acquisition and academic subjects. In other words, CBI is the method that integrates

the target language and content to make the learning both useful and meaningful (Mohan, 1986; Cradall, 1993; Mohan & Beckett, 2001). Its application in educational contexts is often associated with genesis of language immersion education in Canada in the late 1960s and later, with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program in the United States and Great Britain. But the research applying CBI into the field of English for General Purposes (EGP) is rare.

Maritime major College English is a branch of EGP, with the purpose of helping maritime major students acquire the basic skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing via learning the content related to maritime themes. This study is to probe into the effectiveness of CBI in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation. By carrying out the experiment, the present study aims to find out whether CBI is more effective in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation than the traditional teaching method (TTM), and what type of new CBI maritime major College English teaching mode can be constructed. In addition, the research attempts to find and solve the possible problems in the implementation of CBI adopted in maritime major College English teaching as well as other academic field.

1.3 Background of the Study

1.3.1 English Language Teaching Abroad

The key methods in ELT abroad include Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, the Oral and Situational Language Teaching, Audio-lingual Method, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), etc. Thanks to the above key methods in ELT abroad, they all played an important role in the different development period of ELT. It's hard to say which is the best of these methods because they all have their own strengths, weaknesses and influence.

Among the above key methods in ELT, CLT from which CBI develops deserves to be mentioned. CLT began in Britain in the 1960s as a replacement to the earlier structural method, called Situational Language Teaching. In the 1970s, in order to assist the growing numbers of language minority students, such as immigrant children and international students, to achieve English proficiency and academic language proficiency in North America, language researchers and educators devoted efforts to developing bilingual instructional models to help these students with language difficulties (Cummins, 1991; Krashen, 2011).

Since the 1970s, several methodologies of bilingual education have been explored. Based on research of different second language instructions during this

period, Richards (2003) pointed out what constituted instruction in teaching second languages and, especially, the language structural theories that have been criticized by scholars, particularly Chomsky (1973), who argued that “structural linguistics is fundamentally behavioristic and necessarily tied to behaviorism.” About at the same time, communicative language teaching was rapidly developing in Britain and became a promising second language teaching approach that was also adopted in the USA and Canada. This kind of situational language instruction partially replaced traditional instructional methods, such as the grammar translation approach and the audio-lingual method, in second language teaching. Moreover, Richards and Rodgers’ study (1986) revealed that the communicative language approach views language as a “vehicle for expressing of functional meanings” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: p. 167). Even though grammar was included in the communicative approach, the communicative dimensions of language were more emphasized than the grammatical characteristics.

In the 1980s, as Baker and Jones (1998) acknowledged, content-based English instruction has been developed from the teaching methodology of Canadian French Immersion programs that had been used for over 30 years. The design of CBI was based on the philosophy of the communicative approach. According to a study by Eskey (1997), CBI is regarded as a potential methodology in ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom because meaningful communication in the language classroom was the foundational philosophy of the CBI model. In other words, it is important to remember that “people do not learn languages and then use them, but that people learn language by using them” (Eskey, 1997: p. 133). Memorizing grammar rules or doing meaningless drills are not natural processes in language learning, and such methods cannot fulfill learners’ needs.

From the above mentioned, we can see CBI is quite different from TTM in that language proficiency can be acquired by learning the content of the subject rather than learning the language itself. A lot of research and experiments have proved that CBI is a promising and well performed teaching philosophy as a pedagogical approach to second language teaching.

1.3.2 English Language Teaching in China

With the fast development of the society in China, English proficiency is vital for social demand and personal need. On the one hand English has become an indispensable means to know about the world and further open up, on the other hand, as for the personal need, English proficiency is regarded as a key to a large quantity of opportunities, including entering and graduating from university, going

abroad for further education, getting a desirable job, and so on. In order to meet the ever-increasing demand of English proficiency, much more attention has been paid to the English language teaching.

ELT in China has a history of more than 100 years. Before the liberation, exactly speaking, in 1898, with the purpose of encouraging Chinese people to learn from the West and opposing stubbornness and conservatism, Zhang Zhidong proposed “Zhong Xue Wei Ti, Xi Xue Wei Yong”(中学为体,西学为用), which means-study China to extract the cultural essence, study the West for practical techniques. Under the influence of “Zhong Xue Wei Ti, Xi Xue Wei Yong”, scholars and officials called for the promotion of ELT in China because they thought English would provide access to the western advanced science and technology, with which China could strengthen itself in order to keep the country from being attacked and occupied by foreign powers. At the same time, there were also deep concerns about how to protect Chinese culture from being eroded by the West (Dzau, 1990; Ross, 1993; Teng & Fairbank, 1979). The year of 1949 is very important for China, when the People’s Republic of China was founded. Since then, the Chinese government has paid much more attention to ELT in China to keep up with the development of other countries in the world. With China’s reform and opening to the outside world, an important conference on foreign language teaching was held in 1978, which was organized by the Chinese government’s teaching administrative authority, the Ministry of Education. English was given the equal prominent position with the subjects of Chinese and Mathematics in schools. By the early 1980s, the government had restored English as a compulsory subject in the college entrance exam. With the further opening up to the outside world, more and more Chinese scholars went abroad to get further education, and at the same time, more foreigners went to China to do business. As a result, the enthusiasm for learning academic English or business English is higher than ever before.

Either academic English or business English is taught in universities, so College English teaching is vital. College English is an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum system, and College English teaching and learning is one of important ways to foster and upgrade college students’ English integrated abilities in use. In order to improve students’ English comprehensive abilities, a lot of scholars and teachers are attempting to update their teaching approaches with the purpose of promoting the effectiveness of their instruction. Because of English as a foreign language in China, there are not enough authentic communication environments for students. The urgent task for English teachers is to create as many contextual

communication situations as possible to provide students with adequate opportunities for language input and output.

The cry for College English teaching and learning reform has almost never ceased. Since 2004, with the publication of College English Curriculum Requirements(trial edition), there has been continuous discussion about the nature of College English teaching and learning, and the significance of research into College English teaching and learning has been highlighted. Although the reform of College English teaching has been carried on for many years, the result is not satisfying. After many years' English learning, students cannot communicate with English native speakers fluently and remain deficient in understanding academic materials related to their majors.

College English teaching and learning in practice still tends to be instrumentally rationality-oriented in its teaching and learning subjectivity, content, process and assessment, resulting in “loss of objectives”, “process screened”, “result dislocation”, finally leading to the phenomena and problems of ignoring the basis of “cultural exchange” and the process of “cultural understanding” in College English teaching and learning, so the reform of College English teaching is more and more urgent.

1.3.3 Challenge to Maritime Major College English Teaching in China

With the rapid development of the shipping industry and the trend of economic globalization, English, being the international language and working language on board the ship, is becoming more and more important for all the people engaged in marine activities. Besides the daily communicative competence in English, students of maritime majors should also possess a high level of the professional English-Maritime English (ME). As a matter of fact, the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers, 1995 (STCW-95), has formulated the standard of competence for seafarers.

Of all those maritime conventions in International Maritime Organization (IMO), STCW convention is the most important one for seafarers. The 1995 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers 1978 (STCW-78) have significantly changed the way seafarers are trained and certificated for service on modern seagoing ships. It is therefore vital that all seafarers understand how these amendments will affect their ability to maintain their professional qualifications, and that they have a means for identifying where they need additional training to acquire a 1995 STCW certificate or endorsement. The key to maintaining a safe shipping environment and keeping oar

oceans clean lies in all seafarers across the world observing high standards of competence and professionalism in the duties they perform on board. 1995 (STCW-95) sets those standards, governs the award of certificates and controls watch-keeping arrangements. Its provisions not only apply to seafarers, but also to ship-owners, training establishments and national maritime administrations. The Convention was adopted by the IMO in 1978 and came into force in 1984. During the late 1980s, it was clear that STCW-78 was not achieving its aim of raising professional standards worldwide, and IMO members had to repair it.

This was done in the early 1990s, and the amended Convention is now referred to as STCW-95. Whereas the STCW-78 focused almost entirely on knowledge, the emphasis of STCW-95 has been shifted to practical skills and competence underpinned by theoretical knowledge. The standards set by the Convention apply to seafarers of all ranks serving on sea-going merchant ships registered under the flag of a country Party to the Convention. The Convention has already been accepted by 133 countries, including all major labor suppliers and shipping registries. This number represents more than 98% of the world's merchant fleet. In STCW-95, all important word is certificate.

The term "certificates" covers all official documents required under STCW-95. It includes certificates of competence, endorsements, certificates of proficiency, special certificates and any documentary evidence showing that requirement of the Convention has been met. Certificates are important as they are the main paper evidence you have on hand to prove that your level of maritime education and training, your length of service at sea, your professional competence, medical fitness and age all comply with STCW-95 standards. Every Party to the Convention has to ensure that certificates are only issued to those seafarers who meet STCW Standards. For certificates, the key part is certificate of competence. This document is issued to masters, officers, radio operators and ratings forming part of a watch, who are qualified for the standards of competence relevant to their particular functions and level of responsibility on board. As mentioned above, an officer must hold a certificate according to his rank or his responsibility. To become an officer, the test of English is a must. STCW-95 detailed the requirement for English competence.

Shortly after its announcement, the STCW-95 has become the focus of all the people engaged in ocean-shipping industry. Thus a careful study of the STCW-95 is vital to comply strictly with the requirements stipulated in STCW-95. According to STCW-95, language proficiency is specifically required for the certification of

officers in charge of navigation technology and marine engineering to ensure the safety of seagoing service.

The three criteria concerning the officers' language competence in STCW are as follows:

(1) The officers should have adequate knowledge of the English language in order to understand the specifications related to navigation technology and marine engineering to perform their duties.

(2) The officers should be able to interpret English language publications relevant to their duties.

(3) The officers should be able to communicate with others in English clearly and be understood.

The above mentioned criteria show that the STCW attaches great importance to the practical capability of the seafarers' English. The seafarers need to have comprehensive English proficiency, namely the speaking, listening, reading and writing capabilities, to meet the requirements stipulated by STCW.

In China, College English Test Four (CET - 4) and College English Test Six (CET - 6), as a standard of testing students' English level, have attracted most of the college English teachers and the freshmen and sophomores. However, this leads to a phenomenon that there are less assigned credit hours for professional English training, for example practicing ME learning and preparing for National Seafarers Certificate Examination. So it's an issue on how to balance CET - 4, CET - 6 and National Seafarers Certificate Examination for a maritime major student. It's urged to find a more effective and efficient teaching mode which can combine English language learning and the content of maritime major knowledge. Up till now, in China, there are fewer empirical studies on the effectiveness of CBI on ELT in the field of College English, let alone CBI on maritime major College English teaching. Under this kind of research background, I decided to carry out this study.

1.4 The Scope, Aim and Significance of This Study

1.4.1 The Scope of This Study

Language teaching can be divided into two main parts, first language teaching and second language teaching. The scope of this study is English language teaching which belongs to second language teaching. English language teaching consists of two sections, English language learning and English language teaching. The former is made up of mastery of knowledge and language in use and the latter is composed of English language teaching theory and English language teaching practice. Success in

learning a foreign or second language (L2) depends on a variety of factors such as the duration and intensity of the language course, the characteristics and abilities of the teacher, the appropriateness of the teaching methodology, the quality of the textbook, the size and composition of the learner group, the amount of natural L2 practice opportunities, and last but not least, the characteristics of the language learner, three of which are largely beyond the teacher's control: motivation, learning styles and learner strategies (Andrew D. Cohen & Zoltan Dornyei, 1998). This study focuses on two factors of the above mentioned, the appropriateness of the teaching methodology and one element of characteristics of the language learner, learning motivation in order to probe into the effectiveness of CBI in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation. Furthermore, the result of this study can direct the practice of College English teaching and enrich the theory of English language teaching.

1.4.2 The Aim of This Study

Taking 152 maritime major students in Dalian Ocean University (DLOU) as subjects of this research (74 from the experimental classes and 78 from the control classes), this study aims to probe into the effectiveness of CBI in improving maritime major students' English proficiency and learning motivation, and attempt to construct a new CBI maritime major College English teaching mode. This research attempts to contribute to our knowledge about the act of teaching, refresh College English teachers' teaching concept and promote the quality of College English. Furthermore, it can push the reform of College English teaching, enrich the theory of foreign language teaching and direct the practice of College English teaching.

1.4.3 The Significance of This Study

The Ministry of Education issued the Revised Syllabus for College English Teaching in 2004 which emphasizes the importance of teaching approaches in improving the quality of English teaching. Based on the students' and teaching requirements, English teachers should utilize more flexible and effective approaches in ELT so as to make students get maximum benefit. Nowadays, in maritime major College English teaching in China TTM is still used, which is teacher-centered and places strong emphasis on individualistic learning and knowledge transmission. It is obvious that many students' English comprehensive abilities cannot be improved largely after many years' English study. This kind of situation cannot follow the step of the reform of College English teaching and is far away from social and personal needs.

From the above mentioned ,we can see maritime major College English teaching