

外研社 高等英语教育学术会议文集

中国英语教学研究会 2005年会论文集

Selected Papers from 2005 CELEA Annual Conference

主 编： 杜瑞清



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

外研社 高等英语教育学术会议文集

中国英语教学研究会 2005年会论文集

Selected Papers from 2005 CELEA Annual Conference

主 编：杜瑞清

副主编：杨达复 刘相东



外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

北京 BEIJING

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国英语教学研究会 2005 年会论文集 = Selected Papers from 2005 CELEA Annual Conference: 英文 / 杜瑞清主编. — 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2009.7
(外研社高等英语教育学术会议文集)
ISBN 978-7-5600-8812-9

I. 中… II. 杜… III. 英语—教学研究—学术会议—文集—英文
IV. H319.3-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2009) 第 119296 号

出 版 人: 于春迟

责任编辑: 刘相东

封面设计: 张 峰

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 中国农业出版社印刷厂

开 本: 787×1092 1/16

印 张: 31.75

版 次: 2009 年 8 月第 1 版 2009 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5600-8812-9

定 价: 69.90 元

* * *

如有印刷、装订质量问题出版社负责调换

制售盗版必究 举报查实奖励

版权保护办公室举报电话: (010)88817519

物料号: 188120001

Preface

It is the practice of China English Language Education Association (CELEA) to hold annual conferences, which are smaller in scale and more focused in topics on the English education in China than its grand international conference every three years. In October 2005, therefore, Xi'an International Studies University (formerly Xi'an Foreign Languages University) had the privilege of hosting the 2005 annual conference with the general theme of Directions of China's English Education. Since this was too broad for discussion, sub-themes or topics were developed for relatively in-depth discussions in papers submitted before the conference and group sessions during the conference. These include China's English education, past, present and particularly its reform endeavors across the country, directions in the teaching methodology, and strategies for Chinese learners and teachers of English.

Since it was proposed to be an annual conference, we made preparations for a scale of 100 participants, which would be good for both the discussion and logistic considerations. But the abstracts submitted from teachers in the fields numbered over 300, far more than we had expected. This meant that we, as organizers, had to work harder in the selection of papers and to plan for a conference with a much bigger attendance. While we had to cope with extra work we felt happy and excited, because the response well demonstrated the big strides in China's ELT over the years as a result of the painstaking work on the part of the practitioners in the field across the country.

The conference was held October 14-18 with over 150 participants across China and scholars from overseas. We were fortunate to have Professor Hu Wenzhong, chairman of CELEA who has figured prominently in China's ELT and been instrumental in China's accession to AILA. The insights he offered in his opening remarks and the good tidying that China will host the 2011 AILA World Congress inspired all the participants and ensured the success of the ensuing plenary and group sessions.

The plenary sessions heard presentations on English education from different perspectives. The ethnographic study undertaken in Singapore on English language teaching, for example, provided an international perspective. The paper's concluding emphasis on the suitability of "Western methods in Asian classrooms" is particularly thought-provoking to the Chinese practitioners in the field. Other plenary speakers discussed deficiency in critical thinking and analytical abilities on

the part of Chinese learners, the iconicity of the learning of English, learner errors in the Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC), translation in relation to English teaching, the promotion of positive test impact in curriculum development with reference to the revision of the TEM 4/8 test syllabus.

The group discussions, which were conducted in most surprising seriousness, encompassed all areas of the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language in the Chinese context, namely, curricular development, cross cultural communication, methodology and strategies, basic skills training, the use of technology, as well as testing and assessment. The papers selected and included in this book well reflect these varied areas, but due to space we have to be highly selective. Here, we must apologize to those teachers whose papers are excluded. There is depth in every paper that was submitted and reading them for selections purposes we felt sure that the authors have all done painstaking work and solid research. It is our sincere hope that their papers will be published soon elsewhere and they will continue to exert themselves in their academic pursuits.

Whether included in this book or not, all the papers signal the healthy, vigorous development and change in China's ELT. First, we see the obvious reemphasis on the basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. It must be reiterated that these fundamentals in the language will remain fundamental forever in China's ELT, at any level and for any purpose, if China has to maintain its good standards of English as a foreign language. Therefore, it is essential for us to reach and hold this consensus both in theory and practice. Second, large issues have continued to be addressed with more effective measures, such as strategies, curricular development, use of technology, testing, evaluation and assessment. In view of the changed and changing scene in China's ELT, these important areas must be addressed with more research and experimentation. Third, it is apparent that ELT in China continues to be in flux, which is necessary and vital for its healthy and sustainable development, for it is precisely in constant flux that we see the innovation and vigor in the field.

In conclusion, I must say that the response to, attendance of, and the earnestness during the conference well demonstrate the need for increasing interaction of China's ELT teachers face to face, which is indispensable in this day and age, in spite of the fast, phenomenal technological development. It is the common desire of the participants that there should be more conferences of this nature, big or small in scale, general or specific in focus, and coastal or interior in venue.

Du Ruiqing

Contents

Preface	Du Ruiqing (iv)
---------------	-----------------

Plenary Addresses

Asian realities in English learning: The case of Singapore	Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew (3)
Emotional intelligence in language learning: The reconstruction of the architecture of the self in the new language	Margaret Percy (17)
Test impact: Scopes, problems and solutions	Zou Shen (29)
A variational approach to translation as a method of English Teaching	Sun Yifeng (38)

English Education, Teaching Methods, Curricula and Education Technology

Foreign language planning: The neglected sociolinguistic aspect of ELT in China	Wu Bo (55)
Practice makes perfect? — Implications of Singlish for Chinese EFL education	Li Fangjun (65)
Pragmatic competence cultivation deserves a place in college English teaching	Cai Lihua (75)
A multi-focused approach to ESP teacher education	Wang Jiazhi (83)
The role of teachers as mediators in teaching English as a foreign language	Qu Wenjie (91)
Roles we develop by: A case study of EFL teacher roles in the curriculum innovations in China	Zhang Dian'en (105)
An empirical investigation of English majors' needs directed to school-based EGP curriculum development in Chongqing Educational College	Yan Wenya & Huang Ping (116)
An empirical study of the "English plus minor courses" program	Cai Hongwen (128)
Communication strategies and English teaching materials	Cheng Yuefang (140)

A discourse analysis of the EFL teacher's questioning strategies	Yang Xueyan (149)
Problematic issues in current specialized English for architecture teaching in China	Li Li (164)
Making sense of college English teaching — A survey on how to use and organize the classroom, students, materials to maximize learning	Zhang Jin (192)
Research on task-based language teaching in middle school in China	Yang Suxiang (204)
Reflections on multimedia-assisted teaching	Zhai Fang & Tian Aiguo (220)
Study on affective factors in college English teaching mode based on computer and Internet	Zhang Zhigang & Chang Fang (230)

Second Language Acquisition and Learning Strategies

Understanding the importance of notice in second language acquisition from the cognitive perspective	Wang Gaiyan (241)
The semantics of the English progressive and its L2 acquisition	Hu Rong (251)
On the relationship between big-five traits and English learning achievements of university students: A case study	Zhao Wenxue & Wang Yanzhi (264)
Application of cooperative learning to college English teaching — A study report on the effectiveness of cooperative learning	Yin Zhao (271)
Learner training: Considerations and steps in preparing learners for the self-access language learning	Liu Li (285)
An investigation of receptive vocabulary size and productive vocabulary size of some college students in Beijing	Zheng Qi (297)

Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Translation

A quantitative study on learning strategies used by English majors in listening comprehension	Mao Xiulin (313)
Motivating students in an EFL listening course	Wang Xiaoying (331)
Teachabilities of L2 listening and speaking strategies	Wang Yimin (343)
A novel approach to marking oral language proficiency	Yi Qianhong (353)

A research on evaluating the effectiveness of strategy training for reading in an EFL context	Wang Zhe & Liu Shijuan (363)
Incorporating discourse analysis into the teaching of English newspaper reading to undergraduate English majors in the EFL context	Liu Mantang (390)
A Remedy for College English Reading	Zhang Xin (403)
The features of rhetorical patterns in the English expository essays by undergraduates of English majors at four Chinese universities	Qi Fang (411)
Teaching writing for Chinese college EFL learners in a large multilevel class—A solution from designing an interactive ICT-based writing task	Wei Huiyu (427)
The teaching of translation as a process	Li Yihui (443)

Testing and Assessment

An analysis of three testing tasks from the perspectives of validity and reliability	Zhang Yanli (459)
Improving the test tasks to improve the authenticity of TEM listening sub-tests	Dang Zhengsheng (468)
English language test-taking strategy training in China: An investigation of training status & an empirical study of training effects in IELTS reading test	Shen Weihua (483)

Plenary Addresses

Asian Realities in English Learning: The Case of Singapore

Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew

Nanyang Technological University

Abstract: Until recently, communicative language teaching (CLT) was the much favored methodology in many Asian countries and regions such as Singapore, Malaysia, India and Hong Kong SAR. CLT began in the late 1970s in Europe and gained momentum in the 1980s in many English-learning countries all over the world. A whole generation of younger Asians in the 1980s and 1990s grew up learning English through the CLT approach in the classroom. This paper will chart the reasons behind the rise and fall of CLT in Singapore and comment on its motivations and effects. It will also share findings from a study with regards to teacher attitudes towards the use of various teaching approaches. The paper will conclude with a discourse on “Asian Realities” where the adoption of language methodology is concerned.

Keywords: communicative language teaching; Singapore; teaching methodology

Introduction

Until recently, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was the most favored English language teaching methodology in Singapore. CLT started in the late 1970's in Europe and gain momentum in the early 1980's in many English-learning countries all over the world, and one of these countries was Singapore. A whole generation of Singaporeans in the 1980s and 1990s grew up to learning English through the CLT approach in the schools. In this paper, CLT refers generally to increased participation by learners in decisions pertaining to course content as well as a more learner-centered style of teaching. It is seen as a general movement in the 1980s to break away from more traditional kinds of approaches (such as considering language only in terms of grammar and vocabulary) to the more communicative functions that a language may perform (Littlewood 1981: 94). It also refers to small group activities as well as role play and games in which learners are given opportunities to use grammatical structures. There is also more emphasis placed on learners' contribution through independent

learning and the teacher's role is less dominant. Last but not least, the teacher's role as "co-communicator" also places him or her on an equal basis with the learners and help break down tension and barriers between them.

This paper will chart the reasons behind the "rise" and "fall" of CLT in Singapore and comment on its motivations and effects. It will also share findings from an ethnographic study undertaken in the Singapore classroom on English language teaching with regards to teacher attitudes towards the use of various teaching approaches. It will conclude with a discourse on "Western" methods, the phenomenon of change, and the suitability of "Western" methods in the Asian classroom.

CLT in Singapore

Like the world at large, Singapore has many distinct races and cultures. Its population of approximately four million is ethnically heterogeneous with about 77% Chinese, 15% Malay, 6% of Indian origin, and 2% of other ethnic definitions. At the time of independence from the British colonial authorities in 1959, there were four language stream schools in Singapore: English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. However, by the 1970s, pupil enrollment in Mandarin, Malay and English schools took a steep decline as parents were more desirous to send their children to English medium schools, as that was where the more well-paid employment opportunities were. Since then, English had become the predominant working language in Singapore as well as the preferred lingua franca between the different ethnic groups in the country.¹ Today, all schools use English as the medium of instruction and the teaching of English takes up a significant proportion of curriculum time (Batia & Chew 2004).

In the 1980s, the British Council in Singapore was in the forefront in the promotion of teaching English through CLT. Through its close association with the other teacher-training institutions of Singapore such as the Regional Language Center and the National Institute of Education,² it managed to convince language leaders to promote this "innovative and effective" way of teaching. Consequently, in 1985, Singapore began to implement the ACT (Active Communicative Teaching) training for in-service language teachers. ACT emphasized the importance of language acquisition and the importance of immersing the learner in a print-rich and stimulating environment in which the target language was used comprehensively to convey meaning. Teachers trained under ACT were encouraged to use a wide range of communicative teaching strategies to encourage pupil interaction and participation. Lessons tended to take the form of a number of activities and there was only incidental learning of language items. Reading was a starting point for a new experience and extensive

reading an important component. ACT also emphasized the appropriacy of language use and the relevance of task-based activities (Chew 2005).

The theories of Canale & Swain (1980), Ellis (1984), Krashen (1985) were constantly referred to in the pre-service and in-service training of language teachers. Canale & Swain (Ibid.) differentiated “communicative competence” from “grammatical competence” (a knowledge of the linguistic system of the target language), “sociolinguistic competence” (an understanding of the dynamics of conversation) and “discourse competence” (understanding of interconnectedness of one text to the entire discourse). Richards & Rogers (1986) advocated an emphasis on “function” rather than “forms”. Krashen’s (1982) Monitor theory proposed that adults have two independent systems for developing ability in second language — subconscious language acquisition and conscious language learning. Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second language’s “natural” communication in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Following Krashen, language teachers were urged to simulate conditions for “acquisition” in their classrooms.

Subsequently, the language syllabus for Singapore schools was revamped in 1991 to take into account the theoretical foundations behind CLT. This was quite a remarkable change because before this period, the syllabus (Ministry of Education 1981) was a structural one where language was perceived as a collection of well-practiced habits with a stress on the explicit teaching of vocabulary, spelling, phonics and grammar. In contrast, the 1991 syllabus (Ministry of Education 1991) emphasized “fluency” rather than “accuracy”; and “function” rather than “form”. Group work was emphasized and students were encouraged to work together to achieve common goals. More creative types of activities were encouraged such as the use of drama, role-play, story telling, poetry, songs and games as means of inspiring students to express themselves while enabling them to acquire language skills indirectly. It was the first syllabus in Singapore to view teachers as facilitators rather than as purely knowledge-givers. The direct teaching of grammar was discouraged, in line with the belief that the pupils’ assimilation of language is more effectively conveyed through the context, the teacher being primarily a facilitator of the acquisition of language.

The teaching of writing also saw a significant change. Now, there was an emphasis on the “process” rather than the “product” of writing with the theoretical ideas of Elbow (1981) and Murray (1983) in the forefront of change. Before, the teaching of writing was skill-based, with the use of good models as aids. Then, the teacher taught writing in terms of the organization of key ideas and in terms of the use of good grammar. They would diligently

introduce a topic, talk about it, perhaps explain how students could write it, ask the class to write and after the pupils had written their compositions, they would then check, mark, and return the piece of work. In contrast, process writing focused on the interaction between the writer, the reader, the writer's craft and the content of his writing. Drafting, revising, editing, peer-group conferencing were now encouraged. The "process" of writing now became more important than the "product" and writing to learn rather than learning to write became the focus of attention.

The Study

A small study was undertaken in 2004 to discover the opinions of primary and secondary school teachers with regards to the use of CLT and process writing in their classrooms. 120 primary and secondary school teachers with a minimum of five years teaching experience from seven neighborhood schools were surveyed. Three of these schools were primary ones with students aged between 7 and 12 while four were secondary ones with students aged between 13 and 16. The teachers involved in the survey taught a wide-ranging level of language classes from Primary 1 to Secondary 4. The average age of the teachers was 35 years of age and the average years of experience they had in teaching language was 10.9 years. All had undergone either pre-service or in-service training in CLT. This age group was targeted as we felt that they would have more knowledge, experience and opinions with regards to effective teaching and learning classroom processes. At the same time, they would also have adequate knowledge, experience and training in new methods. Teachers were asked to fill in a short questionnaire comprising only three questions. Space was provided after each question for them to write their comments (see Appendix). The results were then tabulated and conveyed to the Heads of Department of English in their respective schools so that these could be shared with their respective teachers. In addition, we observed 12 language lessons in the school, which enabled us to glean further insights as to teacher attitudes and preferences in the classroom. Subsequently, the teachers in these classrooms (10% of the cohort) were also interviewed as to their personal opinions on syllabus guidelines and teaching methodology.

The following are the results of the study:

Question 1. Teachers' replies to "I find the CLT approach to be a useful and effective way to teach language in my classroom"

Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Not sure (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
11	18	22	42	7

Only 11% of teachers “strongly agreed” with the statement while 18% “agreed” to the statement. 22% were “neutral”, 42% “disagreed” and another 7% “strongly disagreed” with it. This makes a total of only 29% who may be said to be “comfortable” with the use of CLT and who believed that it will help them in their classroom. In the comments section, these teachers argued that CLT took the drudgery out of the learning process and injected elements of fun and creativity such as in the variety of language tasks and authentic information-gap activities.

However, these teachers were outnumbered by the 49% (42% + 7%) who disagreed that CLT was an effective method despite the fact that it had been officially promoted since the early 1980's. These teachers preferred the more traditional chalk-and-talk approach, with the teacher as the knowledge bearer and director of the classroom. Their reasons were apparent in the section on comments. First, teachers pointed out that there was not enough time in the syllabus to effectively implement the CLT approach as there were too many continuous assessments and examinations each year; and they felt that their main mission here was in ensuring a good grade for their students, rather than in giving them a “good time” conversing with their peers. Hence, a teaching approach which followed the outline of the examination paper would, in their opinion, stand the student in better stead. Second, CLT methodology involved a lot of “process” time, which they felt should be better allocated to topics such as grammatical knowledge so as to help students in the editing of their own work. Third, huge class sizes (averaging about 40) also made it essential for teachers to possess good management techniques so as to control the noise level and many found this difficult. The focus on students' work rather than teachers' knowledge also meant a loss of strict control by teachers and some teachers were obviously stressed (and threatened) by this. Some teachers also confessed that they only used CLT when there was a visitor or Ministerial official around, as such an approach would indicate that they were “trendy” and “modern” in their teaching. Last but not least, teachers were unwilling to adopt CLT whole-heartedly because the ranking of teachers at the end of each academic year meant that teachers had to constantly prove themselves as “hardworking” by giving out work that could be “seen” and easily quantifiable, such as written compositions, project work, assignment, test papers, etc. This was preferable to group and pair work which were relatively “ephemeral” activities that could effectively take place but were unfortunately “unseen”.

Question 2: Teachers’ replies to “what is your preferred way of teaching English in your classroom?”

Methodology	%
Communicative approach group/pair work	18%
Grammar-based structured approach	19%
Reading comprehension (teaching language through the use of reading strategies)	38%
Exam-focused approach	21%
Not sure/Don’ t know	4%

The second question asked teachers to indicate their favorite methodological approach to the teaching of language. Here, 18% indicated that their most preferred teaching strategy in the classroom was the CLT approach. 19% indicated a preference for a grammar-based structured approach, 38% a reading comprehension approach, 21% an exam-focused approach and 4% “not sure/ don’ t know”. Teachers who favored communicative group/pair work (CLT) gave the reason that this was a welcomed variety to teacher-talk and was also a popular activity with pupils. Group work would also enable students to take a “break” from too-much teacher-talk and give them a valuable opportunity to practice language in a more natural way.

The 19% of teachers who favored a grammar-based structured approach felt that it was important that students understood the “building box” of language. Many teachers felt that the explicit teaching of grammar was necessary because society still had a serious preference for error-free writing. These teachers felt that group work fostered only fluency in language but not accuracy, which they felt was just as important. Their students would lapse into the speaking of Singlish during group and more informal classroom work, and this would be at variance with their objectives as language teachers, which was to foster the speaking of Standard English.

38% of teachers listed their favorite language teaching approach as that of reading comprehension. They preferred teaching their students the English language through the use of reading materials, e. g. , a traditional read-question-and-answer sequence and occasionally with the help of directed reading-thinking approaches such as the DRTA (Directed Reading and Thinking Approach) and KWL (Know-Want to Know-What I have learnt). They felt that the reading approach was the best since the ability to read well played a large part in the examination. In their opinion, there was no need to focus on speaking activities since students were already speaking Singlish fluently outside the classroom.

The 21% who confessed to the preference of a more exam-focused

methodology said that this was because their students expected them to predict the likely examination topics for the coming year so as to enable them to score the best marks in the shortest possible time. The preferred strategy here was to go over the answers in the assessment book which followed the rubric of the examination paper, and to pause briefly at opportune moments to explain significant points in grammar, vocabulary or style. Much of the learning would therefore be centered on the use of texts and worksheets. Teachers also commented that if they were not exam-focused in their classroom practices, the parents of the students would have no recourse but to employ private tutors to do so. Teachers commented that they had “no choice” in view of the macro goals of attaining higher school rankings in Singapore. These findings correlate with Tan’s (2001) research which found that experienced teachers strongly endorsed learning activities that enhance memorization. CLT student-directed small group discussions that empower learners with responsibilities and encourage independent learning rarely take place since teachers prefer recitation and seatwork to sharing time and student-directed small group activities.

Question 3: Teachers’ replies to “What is your preferred way of teaching writing?”

Methodology	%
Process writing	20%
Exam-directed writing (Modeling with samples of good essays)	39%
A mix of everything	45%

Process writing, the method advocated by the 1991 syllabus in line with the main principles of the CLT, only engendered a favored count of 20%. Comments given by teachers in the questionnaire may explain these figures. First, the process approach was not favored because with an average class size of 40, it was almost impossible for the teacher to examine and comment on more than one draft of the paper of any student at any time. Second, while the need for peer group conferencing in the writing process was admitted as a way out of this problem, teachers could not find enough classroom time to incorporate such a technique. Planning, drafting, revising and editing, all requirements for a successful process writing class, were difficult to implement as these took up relatively more curriculum time. Third, peer-group review sessions were difficult to implement as the competitive atmosphere in Singapore classrooms generally did not encourage genuine sharing. Pupils were distrustful of peers’ comments and almost always preferred feedback by adults or teachers on their work. An additional comment was that many of the less able students found it extremely