

Research on Application of Communicative Teaching Approach in English for Tourism Class

Xin Liu ^a, Huiyuan Mao ^b

School of Business Administration, Shenyang University, 54 Lianhe road, Dadong district, Shenyang 110041, China

^aclareliu666@sina.com, ^b24438813@qq.com

Abstract. With the rapid development of tourism industry in China, stakeholders with foreign language skills are gradually demanded by the enterprises in the field of tourism. In such circumstances, talents with professional knowledge and communicative competence in foreign language working environment are enjoyed by most of tourism enterprises. Communicative teaching approach is a language teaching method. The good combination of the language teaching approach and English for Tourism class will raise the efficiency of the class, arouse students' interests in study, and train qualified talents for tourism industry. This research paper analyzes disadvantages of traditional English for Tourism class. Then it attempts to combine this modern teaching theory with the practice, exploring an effective way of applying communicative approach in the teaching of English for Tourism class.

Keywords: Communicative teaching approach, English for Tourism, Communicative competence.

1. Introduction

The requirements for employees who are familiar with professional knowledge and simultaneously good at communicating with foreign tourists and foreign cooperators in tourism are the trend in tourism field. This is a new trend of talents selection for those tourism enterprises. *English for Tourism* is a compulsory English course for specific purposes in the schools of Tourism Administration. It provides students with good opportunities to improve their professional English skills. Meanwhile, how to avoid problems existing in traditional *English for Tourism* teaching, how to develop teachers' guiding function in teaching process, how to arouse the curiosity of the students and improve their competence of applying English in their future work are issues need to be solved urgently. The research paper combines the modern language teaching approach—communicative teaching approach with the teaching of *English for Tourism* in class, aiming to create a new teaching mode for professional language teaching and meeting the demands of tourism enterprises.

2. Communicative Teaching Approach

Communicative language teaching, or the communicative teaching approach, is a language teaching approach that emphasizes interaction on both the means and the ultimate goal of study. The approach emphasizes on organizing classroom activities for providing students opportunities to use foreign language in the communicative situations. Studying language by using it is the key concept in communicative teaching approach. Language skill is obtained by activating learners' original language and stimulating development of language system. Communication in communicative teaching approach means the interaction between teachers and students, students and language. Communicative teaching approach aims to improve students' communicative competence. It stresses function of learners in language learning process and stresses that the goal of language teaching is to train students' language communicative competence according to the specific learning demands. Communicative teaching approach supports the view of teaching language in imitated real life. What students learn in language class should be used in their actual life and work. Teaching objective is to train students' competence of using language creatively and purposefully in different communicative

situation. That is to say, the competence to reorganize the language learning in class, and express their thoughts and emotion fluently are the final goals of language teaching, especially for teaching English course for specific purposes. That is the study purpose of the research paper.

3. Problems Existing in Traditional English for Tourism Class

English for Tourism is a specific English course facing prospective employees in the field of tourism. Teaching contents are concerned with the English professional knowledge used in the operation and management of tourism. Obtaining the competences of communicating with the English native speakers and dealing with regular work in tourism industry in English is an important learning purpose for learners. However, in traditional *English for Tourism* class, there exist some issues causing it difficult to realize.

3.1 Teachers-oriented Class

The obvious feature of traditional *English for Tourism* Class is that students accept knowledge from teachers passively. In the class, students are forced to accept knowledge. They have fewer opportunities to take part in various classroom activities and practices. They usually do certain exercises according to teachers' instructions in a comparatively fixed way and seldom do self-study by searching references and group discussion. Homework assigned by teachers is concerned with certain knowledge without any practical and creative tasks, such as narration after observation, explanation after practices, summarization after reading, discussion after investigation, and so on.

3.2 Frequently Interrupted by Native language

For the Chinese students, Chinese is the native language. In *English for Tourism* class, students study in classroom where does not open to the outside world. In traditional *English for Tourism* class, teachers are accustomed to explaining professional English expressions and analyzing scenes of speaking in Chinese, instead of edifying students in English environments. Absolutely, mother tongue cannot be always used to explain all those difficult and important points in teaching. It is unhelpful to create an English environment for them.

3.3 Lacking Exciting Points in Teaching

Lacking exciting points refers to vapidness in traditional *English for Tourism* class. It embodies in space, time and methods of teaching. Teachers do not focus on creating real context in traditional *English for Tourism* class, which is restraining students' enthusiasm in learning. The contents of teaching in class do not connect with practical work context really. What students learn in class cannot assist them in dealing with practical issues in their future work. It reduces efficiency of teaching intangibly as a matter of fact. Thus, it should be changed by certain new teaching concepts and methods.

4. Communicative Teaching Approach Applied in English for Tourism Class

4.1 Creating Students-oriented Class

In fact, classroom is not a real communicative place, but it is an imitated communicative ground by setting up certain language contexts. Students should be supposed to be the working staff in tourism and try to cope with different matters in the imitated communicative context in English. They are the leading sector of the classroom activities. For instance, the role-play is a typical classroom activity in communicative language teaching. Teachers set up different situations in tourism, meanwhile students play various roles, prepare props, ruminates over how to express in the designated contexts, and finally boldly present themselves with partners in front of the entire class. The one of the obvious examples in *English for Tourism* is about *Hotel Booking*. Students are divided into two parts, i.e., tourist part and reservationist part. After making sure the room reservation procedures in hotel services, students are required to play their roles. "Tourists" communicate with different "reservationists", and try to search for suitable rooms for themselves. Certain non-language such as body language or gesture language can be used in communication. As teachers in communicative

language teaching class, they should remind students of the existing cultural differences between east and west in real situation. Teachers should give students proper directions at a proper time.

4.2 Matching Students' Proximal Development Zone

Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" theory must be considered in communicative language teaching. In communicative language class, teachers should plunge into a teaching research with vigor and gusto in order to innovate the traditional teaching and obtain a better teaching effect. Teachers should study the actual and potential competence of students in utilizing professional knowledge, and then explore scientific curricula structure and appropriate contents for students in *English for Tourism* class. Teaching materials of *English for Tourism* class must be analyzed and reorganized by teachers so that teaching contents can be accepted comparatively easily by students in different communicative activities. If communicative tasks are selected appropriately, students can easily realize that their foreign language competence is not good enough to deal with the issues in the imitated communicative situation. In such a case, students will have strong desire to read related written materials given by teachers.

4.3 Applying Different Teaching Means

In order to arouse students' interests in professional knowledge of *English for Tourism*, various types of teaching means should be applied in communicative activities, such as CAI, videos, audio materials, pictures, real objects. For instance, when talking about dealing with complaints from foreign tourists, video materials can be showed to students first. Then students are required to talk about whether complaints in video are reasonable and how to cope with it. When students learn the topic of tourist commodities, they should be required to show their favorite tourist commodities to the class, introduce the objects to the others, and search for the purchasers. Attracted by vivid video materials and real objects, students are more willing to join the classroom activities.

4.4 Treating Lingual Mistakes Tolerantly

Teachers should tolerate students' mistakes in language. Mistakes are inescapable in professional communication. Communicative teaching approach advocates an unrestrained communicative interaction in foreign language. If students are interrupted by correcting mistakes in the process of communication, their confidence and pride will be depressed. Teachers should encourage students to express their ideas in a relatively fluent way. However, those frequent mistakes, which influence the correct understanding in communication, should not be ignored. Teachers should emphasize on the communicative function and social meaning of professional English, as well as remind students of omitting those significant language mistakes. Correcting mistakes should be done after communicative activities. E.g. the frequent used word *suite* is usually pronounced incorrectly by learners. The word is very important in hotel working procedures. It must be pointed out by teachers at the appropriate time. However, teachers must protect students' enthusiasm for communication when they correct the mistakes in front of the class. Tense is the usual mistake in professional communication. Under most of circumstances, it is not a big obstacle in communication. Thus, teachers mustn't correct the mistakes at all time.

4.5 Strengthening Teachers' Professional Knowledge

In fact, the requirement for teachers in communicative teaching is higher than that in traditional language teaching. In communicative *English for Tourism* class, teachers must have a higher language communicative skill, including English expression competence, extensive tourism knowledge, accurate understanding about foreign cultures as well as communicative tactics. Teachers must be proficient at speaking English, purposely update the latest development and research findings in tourism, and further grasp cultures and language customs of English speaking nations. Moreover, teachers should possess talents of performance so that they can present themselves confidently and humorously in front of students. Life-long learning is necessary for teachers.

5. Summary

According to the research, the elements such as accountability, curiosity, and flexibility are necessary qualities for teachers in communicative language class. Teachers should set up a short-term and long-term working and study targets, and try to become the popular teachers who are familiar with communicative *English for Tourism* class and have sufficient practical experiences in teaching. After studying in communicative *English for Tourism* class, students are aroused by various communicative activities. Communicative approach is an effective teaching method for improving students' professional communicative competence in English and increasing interest and enthusiasm of professional English learning. It will be helpful for students to get more job impunities, enhance their working confidence, and become skilled in communicative competence in tourism industry.

References

- [1] Hu Zhongwen. Research on Communicative Teaching Approach, Foreign Language, 1982(5)
- [2] Richards. J.C & Rodgers. T.S., Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press, 2008.11.
- [3] Kong Luxiao. Application of Communicative Language Teaching in Second Language Learning, Modern Education, 2012, (4).
- [4] Richard. J. C., Communicative Language Teaching Today, People's Education Press, 2007.10.
- [5] David Nunan. Designing Tasks for Communicative Classroom, Cambridge University Press, People's Education Press, 2000.
- [6] Zhang Wei. Communicative Teaching Approach and Speaking English, Foreign Language Teaching, 2001(3).
- [7] Alessandro G Benati. Japanese Language Teaching: A Communicative Teaching Approach, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.
- [8] Brian Tomlinson. Materials Development in Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- [9] Li Wei. Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching, Journal of Asian Social Science, 2014(6).