

Enhancing Chinese Conversation Skills Through an Integrated Teaching Approach of The Subject: Chinese Conversation For 2nd Year Students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to enhance Chinese conversation skills through an integrated teaching approach of the Subject: ‘Chinese Conversation’ for 2nd year students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The three teaching approaches including 1) deductive teaching method, 2) audio lingual method, and 3) grammar translation method were integrated to create the teaching approach to increase Chinese communication performance of the students. The population was 160 students from the 2nd year students majoring Chinese language of 3 classes. Sixty participants were randomly selected from the 3 classes and equally divided into 2 groups, A and B. The research instrument consisted of 1) teaching module and language learning activities and 2) Chinese communication tests for both pre-test and posttest of the two groups.

After the implementation for 1 month, the results revealed that Group A learning with traditional teaching method achieved the mean score of 17.26 from the total of 30, while the B group learning with the integrated teaching method achieved the mean score of 20.20. This clearly showed that Group B surpassed Group A with the mean difference of 2.94. It can be concluded that the integrated teaching method played an important role in enhancing conversation skills does increasing language proficiency of the students. The learning activities provided real communication contexts which students can apply knowledge in real life leading to development in communication proficiency.

Keywords: Enhancing Communication Skills, Integrated Teaching Method, Chinese Conversation, Chinese Conversation Skill

Introduction

In most classroom teaching, only a single teaching method is used, which results in students lacking listening and speaking skills that are essential and should be developed to enhance their potential, as these are the fundamental skills leading to the development of listening and speaking abilities (Montana Tum-on, 2008, p.4). Most students lack a foundation in Chinese language, and their communication skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing Chinese are not developed simultaneously and comprehensively, resulting in speaking skills being weaker than listening, reading, and writing skills (Zhong, 2022, p. 21-39). The Chinese conversation course focuses on practical communication, so teachers should consider providing opportunities for students to engage in communication activities, challenging them to participate in classroom discussions (Long, 1985). Consequently, studies have found that the use of integrated teaching methods, specifically "Constituent substitution," has been researched and proposed by Lu Zhiwei. This technique is used as a standard for vocabulary teaching, starting by analyzing and defining vocabulary with a focus on morphemes with similar meanings. Morpheme analysis emphasizes the language format mechanism, and constituent substitution can be used to teach both vocabulary and grammatical structure. According to Ping Sha (2000), this method is widely referenced and used in modern Chinese textbooks, serving as a standard for classifying vocabulary and identifying sub-units of words with combined sounds. It is applied in line with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory, which emphasizes learning through skill integration. The teaching methods used include the Lecture Method, the Grammar-translation Method, and the Direct Method.

Objective of the research

The aimed to enhance Chinese conversation skills through Chinese communication skills after the implementation of the integrated teaching methodology of the Subject: 'Chinese Conversation' for 2nd year students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The three teaching approaches including 1) deductive teaching method, 2) audio lingual method, and 3) grammar translation method were integrated to create the teaching approach to increase Chinese communication performance of the students.

Research Methodology

The participants in this study included 2nd year students majoring Chinese language of 3 classes. The number of the students in 3 classes were 53, 57, and 50 students, with the total of 160 students. Ten students were randomly selected from

each class to form Group A of 30 students learning with traditional teaching method and other 30 students also randomly selected from the 3 classes were in Group B learning with the integrated teaching methodology.

Data collection

Group A was taught with the traditional method for 2 times while Group B was taught with the integrated teaching methodology together with learning activities for 2 times. The research procedure followed the following steps:

1. Define the objective and analyze the suitable vocabulary and grammatical structure to design the integrated teaching methodology.
2. Design and select content suitable for the learners and align with the objectives of the Subject.
3. Write a test to assess Chinese speaking proficiency of students in both groups.
4. Find the IOC of the lesson plan and the test by asking the 5 experts to validate the instrument and tryout with the reliability of 0.85.
5. Implement the integrated teaching methodology with Group B while Group A learned with the traditional method.
6. Administer the Chinese communication test with the 2 groups after the implementation of the methods.
7. Analyze the scores of the students of the two groups.

Applying Integrated Teaching Methods:

To enhance students' proficiency in Chinese, integrated teaching methods combining the deductive teaching method, the audio-lingual method, and the grammar-translation method with techniques of constituent substitution are applied.

This activity aims to develop students' ability to start with individual words, proficiently combine them into phrases, and further expand them into sentences. Using carefully selected words as teaching tools plays a crucial role in students' mastery of basic Chinese spoken language. The key terms include "要" (yào), "时候" (shíhou), and the grammatical structure "连动句" (serial verb construction). These components are essential vocabulary items at HSK Level 1, frequently used in daily life. Once students become familiar with their application, they will better understand the usage of other words and be able to expand phrases into complete sentences, using them flexibly in basic conversations.

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Teach students to use the verb "要" (yào) to express "desire and intention" proficiently.
2. Introduce the common time noun "时候" (shíhou) to express actions occurring at a specific time.
3. Explain the grammar structure "连动句" (serial verb construction) to help students develop the ability to fluently express consecutive actions at a beginner level.

Table 1: Data collection framework

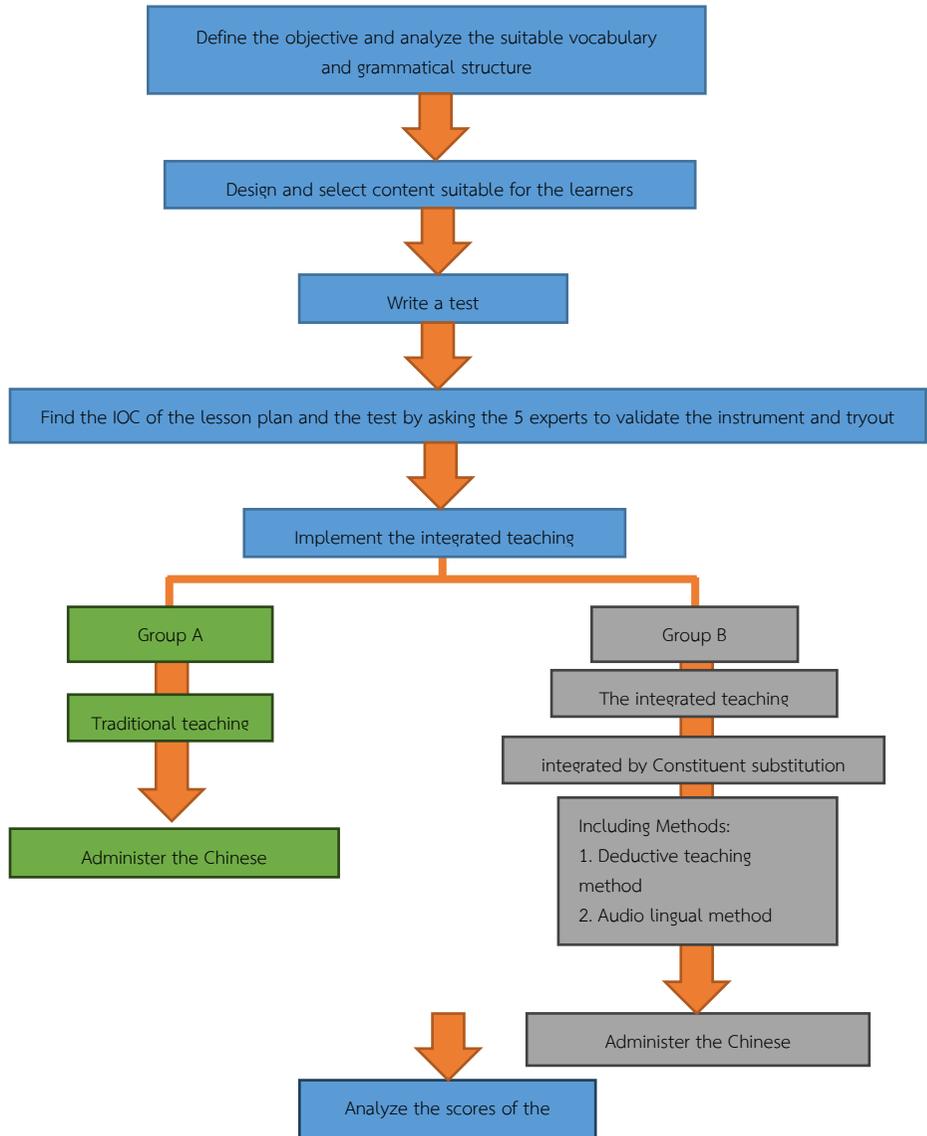
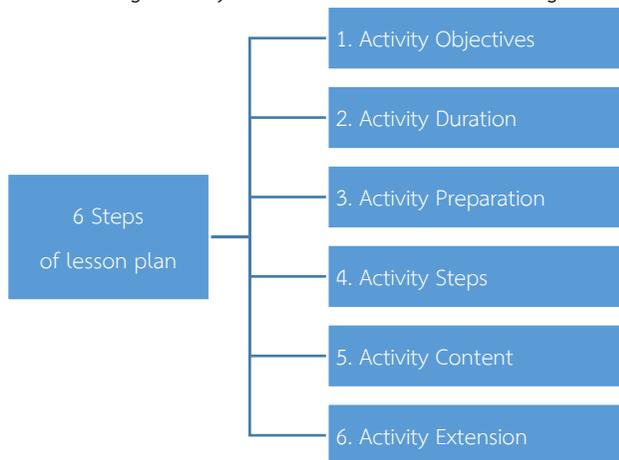


Table 2 : Training Activity Lesson Plan Process of Integrated teaching framework



Each oral training activity lesson plan consists of six steps, as detailed below:

1. Introduction: Briefly introduce the objectives and context of the activity.
2. Vocabulary Presentation: Introduce and explain the key words and phrases.
3. Controlled Practice: Engage students in activities that use the vocabulary in controlled, structured ways.
4. Contextual Practice: Provide opportunities for students to use the vocabulary in more natural, less structured contexts.
5. Production: Encourage students to create their own sentences and dialogues using the new vocabulary.
6. Review and Feedback: Summarize the activity and provide feedback on students' performance.

Research instrument

1. The learning activities to encourage Chinese speaking skills consisted of 10 items which were validated for IOC with the value higher than 0.5.

2. The test to evaluate the Chinese speaking proficiency was validated for the IOC with the value higher than 0.5. The test comprised 2 tasks of 10 questions with the total score of 30 points. The first part was created according to the communicative proficiency criteria by Finocchiaro, Sango (1983) and Bartz (1994:18-82). The criteria included vocabulary and grammatical correctness with the speaking fluency on 3 topics, i.e., vocabulary usage “要”, “时候”, grammatical structure “连动句”, and composing communicative statements.

3. The 2nd part was an observational evaluation of language proficiency. The integrated teaching approach included a constituent substitution method combined with three teaching methods: 1) the deductive teaching method, 2) the audio-lingual method, and 3) the grammar-translation method. In contrast, traditional teaching used only one of the three methods mentioned above. The scoring rubric consisted of two parts: vocabulary and fluency, each rated on a 5-level scale (1-5) based on Linder (1977). The table described the scoring rubric in three parts: vocabulary usage, vocabulary choices, and grammatical structure. Each part included two sub-topics, usage and fluency, with a total score of 30 points.

4. Questionnaires for students to complete about the teaching methodology.

Research Results

Based on the learning activities in the integrated teaching methodology to teach the vocabulary “要” “时候” and grammatical structure “连动句”, it can be concluded that students can develop their communication proficiency as well as analytical skills. The post-test score of Group B was higher than that of Group A 2.94.

1. The deductive teaching methodology and grammar translation can help students clearly comprehend the contents and be aware of the language rules. In addition, Hinkel (2006) also states that in order to design effective integrated listening and speaking activities, it is important to consider several key aspects such as the topic of the listening material and the information required for the speaking preparation; the relevant vocabulary and grammatical features of both the listening and speaking texts; and the structure of the speaking segment. Below, the teacher employs an integrated teaching approach that combines constituent substitution with three teaching methods.

1.1 The teacher only the Traditional Audio-Lingual Method and Deductive Teaching Method, which confuses students regarding the meaning and usage of “要”. For instance, Student B (很要) intends to convey “she really needs it,” but this usage of “要” differs. Conversely, when the teacher integrates Constituent Substitution by replacing Chinese with English vocabulary types in structures such as “我要+N/V,” and employs the **Deductive Teaching Method** to clearly explain word meanings and their nuances, the learning outcomes improve. For example, the teacher initially uses nouns in Thai for easier comprehension, such as “我要+茶” and “我要+水” then shifts to basic and familiar Chinese words, prompting students to repeat the structures, such as asking “你要什么？”

1.2 The teacher only a single teaching method is used the Traditional Grammar Translation Method, resulting in students only knowing the Thai meaning of words without understanding their structural usage, such as with "的时候". Additionally, students encounter difficulties with "的" because they are unsure of its correct placement in sentences, leading to mistakes in sentence formation. Conversely, the teacher utilizes Integrated Teaching by combining Constituent Substitution with the **Grammar Translation Method**. This approach involves presenting vocabulary types like the structure "V+N 的时候", initially using Thai to replace Chinese and then transitioning to simpler Chinese words. The teacher explains meanings in Thai, facilitating easier comprehension for students. This method enhances their confidence in constructing correct sentences.

1.3 The instructional approach to the grammatical structure "连动句" becomes challenging for students when the teacher solely relies on traditional and deductive teaching methods. The complexity of "连动句" itself contributes to students finding it difficult to comprehend. For instance, the teacher typically focuses on explaining grammar structures such as subjects, verbs, and objects. However, when the teacher switches to an Integrated Teaching approach by combining Constituent Substitution with **deductive and audio-lingual methods**, the outcomes noticeably improve. In this method, examples like "我坐公共汽车去大学" (S+V1+O+V2+O) and "小王去超市买面包" (S+来/去+P+V2+O) are used to illustrate the structure. The teacher then engages students with interactive questions such as "你们来这里做什么?" to which students respond appropriately, for instance, "我们来这里学习汉语" This approach simplifies the formation of question sentences, enabling students to practice and correct their usage of serial verb constructions in a structured question-and-answer format. For example:

Teacher: 你怎么来大学?

Student: 我坐公交车来大学。(S+V1+O+V2+O)

Teacher: 你来大做什么学?

Teacher: 我来大学读书。(S+来/去+P+V2+O)

Therefore, this integrated teaching approach focuses on students starting with repeating questions and answers from phrases, gradually expanding to sentences. It utilizes the audio-lingual method for repetitive practice and employs deductive teaching methods to clearly explain the structure.

1. The analysis of the Chinese communication proficiency scores of the 2 groups revealed that the average score of Group B surpassed that of Group A at 2.94. Moreover, the results of the posttest of Group B showed that after the implementation, the students in Group B gained higher scores significantly as showed in the table below.

Table 3: Students' achievement scores

Students' achievement scores	N (30)	Mean (30)	S.D.
Group A Pre-test	30	13.63	5.34
Group A Posttest	30	17.26	4.91
Difference		3.63	0.43
Group B Pre-test	30	14.23	5.19
Group B Posttest	30	20.20	3.62
Difference		5.97	1.57

Before the implementation, the score of the students in Group A was 13.63 and SD = 5.34. After they were taught through the traditional method for 1 month, their average score was 17.26 and SD = 4.91. On the other hand, the students in Group B took a pre-test with the mean score of 14.23. After the implementation of the integrated teaching methodology, they achieved higher communicative score with the mean of 20.20 and SD = 3.62. In other words, the post-test score of Group B was higher than that of Group A 2.94 meaning that the developed integrated teaching methodology can effectively enhance Chinese conversation skills of the students.

Summary of the study

It can be concluded that the integrated teaching methodology of deductive method, audio lingual method, and grammar translation method can enhance the students' speaking proficiency in Chinese. This is also supported by the data from the interview of the students in the two groups. Students in Group A did not understand the vocabulary and could not compose the statements correctly while the students in Group B showed their self-confidence in choosing right vocabulary and constructed correct statements showing higher fluency in Chinese communication. The evidence is clear in the achievement scores of the two groups revealing that the mean score of Group B was 20.20 while that of Group A was 17.26 or 2.94 difference.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, important points of discussion are as follows:

1) From the research the integrated teaching method developed in this study is beneficial for language learning particularly on communication proficiency. On the achievement scores can be explained that the activities provide authentic communication situations leading to students' communication proficiency. This supports All wright R. (1984) stating that language teachers should focus on conversational practice that creates information transfer between teacher and learners. This should be the fundamental concepts in language classroom.

2) The mean score of Group B was 20.20 that showing the vocabulary study in this study presented outstanding techniques of constituent substitution, this aligns with Ding Jianchuan (2015). The principle of this technique is the substitution of vocabulary or grammatical structure which serves similar meanings or functions. Another advantage of this technique is that it can develop students' analytical skills by asking them to compare, analyze, and define vocabulary or grammatical structure. Students can acquire and understand new vocabulary and grammatical structure effectively through the practice of this technique.

3) The explanations of these methods are as follows:

3.1) In the achievement scores of the two groups revealing that the mean score showing the activities were applying an integrated teaching “要” by combined with the deductive teaching method of Group B was higher than that of Group A 2.94, This aligns with Tissana Khammanee (2007) starts by presenting the principle or theory which helps learners clearly understand and see example in various contexts. When learners acquire a theory or a principle, they can apply the structure in other details. This method is suitable in teaching Chinese language and other languages. This also aligns with Lin Yongming (2000), the exercise should take the form of drilling practice or pattern drilling. One advantage is that both Thai and Chinese languages share similar sentence structures without tenses. The students can substitute other components or contents with the new vocabulary in the right function which helps them to apply the knowledge in real situations by self-practice.

3.2) The 3 steps of training activity lesson plan process of integrated teaching. In this teaching method are based on communicative language teaching (CLT) consisting of 3 steps, i.e., presentation, practice, and production by Warangkana (2017). This also aligns with the concept mentioned by Rivers (1980) that language related to practice or repetitive patterns in class. So, language classroom should be focused on communicative practice Rivers (1980). Another effective technique is questioning which applied in training

activity design a questions was can stimulate students' attention by using the right type of questions. Two types of questions include surface questions and in-depth questions. Using the right type of questions can enhance students' communication and interest Clark, J. L. D. (1972), and the achievement scores reflect student be more confident to answer in complicated sentence.

3.3) In teaching the grammatical structure "连动句" this integrated approach involves several activities. Firstly, students understand the meaning through the Grammar Translation Method. They then practice repetition of phrases and sentences using the Audio-Lingual Method. Techniques such as constituent substitution clarify the meaning of statements or content, providing examples for both writing and speaking practice. This methodological approach aligns with Sumittra (1997), who emphasized how such techniques aid students in comprehending new vocabulary and structures clearly. Furthermore, integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing has become widely adopted (Hinkel, 2006). According to teaching principles, learners must grasp content, vocabulary, discourse, and phonetics to effectively learn speaking (Trarone, 2005). Through pattern drilling in the Grammar Translation Method, learners can accurately apply grammatical structures.

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