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Communicative Language Teaching in Senior High School English Education: Applicability, Practical Limitations, and Improvement Strategies

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Abstract

In senior high school English education, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) plays an important role in developing students' communicative competence. However, its implementation faces challenges arising from the dual demands of core competency development and examination preparation. Based on the National English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020), this paper examines the applicability and practical limitations of CLT through a review of relevant literature and an analysis of curriculum requirements and teaching practices. The analysis suggests that CLT is consistent with the development of students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Nevertheless, its implementation is constrained by challenges related to grammar instruction, the authenticity of communicative contexts, limited teaching time, evaluation systems, and changing teacher-student roles. To address these challenges, this paper proposes three approaches: integrating CLT with other teaching methods, incorporating technology into communicative activities, and improving teaching evaluation. It concludes that the effective implementation of CLT requires a balance between communicative competence development and examination requirements. These approaches may provide practical references for adapting CLT to senior high school English teaching.

Keywords

Communicative Language Teaching; Senior High School English Teaching; Core Competencies; Practical Limitations; Improvement Strategies

1. Introduction

In high school English education, “cultivating literacy” and “exam preparation for higher scores” form a complex and contradictory relationship. The National English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) (hereinafter referred to as “curriculum standards”) explicitly emphasizes discipline-specific core competencies, requiring teaching to cultivate students’

language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. However, as Gaokao remains a critical component of talent selection, its examination-oriented logic continues to profoundly influence teaching practices. CLT, which centers on "authentic communication and meaning negotiation," should serve as a bridge connecting competency development and language application. However, in the current high school English education landscape where competency development and exam-oriented teaching coexist, CLT has become trapped in a theoretical and practical dilemma.

On the one hand, in the context of globalization, English, as an international communication tool, aligns closely with the CLT's emphasis on "using language to accomplish tasks," providing a theoretical foundation for the implementation of language proficiency. On the other hand, the standardized testing format of Gaokao English, along with its requirements for grammatical accuracy and response speed, makes it challenging for CLT—which prioritizes "implicit knowledge acquisition and open communication processes"—to be fully implemented in high school classrooms characterized by limited class time and a single-dimensional evaluation system. This contradiction between competency cultivation and examination-oriented realities places CLT in a dilemma of "disconnect between teaching and testing," making the exploration of breakthrough pathways an urgent issue. Re-examining the adaptability of CLT in high school English education is not only a response to the curriculum reform's requirements for competency-based teaching but also a key to breaking free from examination-oriented constraints and balancing the dual goals of education and selection.

2. Theoretical Foundations of CLT

2.1. Linguistic Foundations: From Structuralist Criticism to Communicative Competence

Chomsky's concept of "linguistic competence" views language as an internal rule-generating mechanism inherent in native speakers, focusing on the "formal correctness" of sentence grammar structures. However, this theory fails to explain the social reality of language use, exposing the structuralist perspective's neglect of the communicative essence of language. Hymes addressed this limitation by proposing the "communicative competence" theory, which for the first time places language within a sociocultural dimension, constructing a four-dimensional analytical framework: formal possibility, performative feasibility, contextual appropriateness, and actual realization. This theory overturned the traditional teaching method's sole pursuit of "correctness," establishing the basic principle that "language teaching must balance formal accuracy and functional appropriateness," becoming the theoretical hallmark distinguishing CLT from the listening-speaking method and the grammar-translation method. Halliday's functional linguistics theory further reveals the essence that "language structure reflects communicative

function." The seven language functions he proposed (such as instrumental function, interactional function, and representational function) provide the content organization logic for CLT[1].

2.2. Theoretical Support from Second Language Acquisition

In response to the practical implementation needs of Hymes' theory, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed four elements of communicative competence from an applied linguistics perspective: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. This model directly guides the development of CLT textbooks, such as the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press textbooks (Hereinafter referred to as "FLTRP"), which systematically train sociolinguistic competence through the "Communication Bank" section. Subsequently, Bachmann further refined the theory, proposing that communicative competence consists of three components: linguistic competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. This model provides a cognitive-level explanation for task-based teaching in CLT. Additionally, CLT draws insights from other disciplines, including philosophical, sociological, and psychological perspectives. These interdisciplinary theories are not simply superimposed but are deeply integrated with the "communicative competence" theory[1].

3. The Applicability of CLT in Senior High School English Teaching

3.1. Alignment with Core Competencies in Senior High School English

3.1.1. Language Ability: From Formal Knowledge to Practical Application

The Communicative Approach emphasizes the teaching philosophy of "using language in communication," which aligns closely with curriculum standards' definition of language ability as "the ability to understand and express meaning in social contexts through listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing." For example, in scenario-based teaching, teachers can carefully design roles and scenarios based on the textbook content, ensuring that each scenario is closely related to the course learning objectives. They can also prepare a series of dialogue prompts or scenario tasks for each role, providing real-time language guidance and feedback to help students improve their language expression and communication strategies[2].

3.1.2. Cultural Awareness: From Cultural Knowledge to Intercultural Understanding

The "contextualized communication" characteristic of CLT provides a natural vehicle for cultivating cultural awareness. Teachers can create different cultural contexts based on the teaching content, delve into the cultural knowledge behind the

language, and actively incorporate cross-cultural communication elements, enabling students to broaden their cultural horizons and develop a multicultural perspective while learning the language[3]. This transcends the traditional teaching model of "memorizing cultural knowledge points" and aligns with the curriculum standards' requirement that "cultural awareness is a prerequisite for appropriate language use."

3.1.3. Thinking Quality and Learning Ability: Constructing Cognition Through Communication

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a vehicle for thought, and the development of thinking and language learning are mutually reinforcing[4]. The task design of communicative teaching methods often incorporates critical thinking training. Through negotiating meaning and solving problems, students naturally develop analytical, reasoning, and innovative thinking skills. Additionally, group-based communicative activities encourage students to actively plan their learning and adjust their strategies, fostering "self-directed learning" and "collaborative learning" abilities. This aligns with curriculum standards' assertion that "learning ability is the foundation of lifelong learning."

3.2. Promoting Classroom Interaction and Student Engagement

3.2.1. From Teacher-Led Instruction to Interactive Learning

The Communicative Approach views the classroom as a "communicative community," focusing on the development and enhancement of communicative competence through teaching activities. The key lies in the transformation of the teacher's role, shifting from a "knowledge transmitter" to an "interactive facilitator." In traditional teaching models, teachers are the absolute leaders of teaching activities, while students often occupy a passive, receptive position. The core of traditional teaching lies in how teachers unilaterally transmit knowledge to students. In contrast, the Communicative Approach advocates a student-centered teaching philosophy, emphasizing active student participation. This does not weaken the role of teachers but rather places higher demands on them, requiring them to undergo a more challenging transformation of their functions.

3.2.2. Multi-Dimensional Interaction Stimulates Learning Motivation

Peer interaction serves as an important supplement to teacher-student interaction, facilitating knowledge sharing and co-construction through collaborative dialogue or languaging[5]. Within the framework of CLT, peer interaction breaks the traditional one-way input model of the classroom through the design of "information asymmetry." Teachers can design tasks that involve information gaps between students, prompting students to initiate communication proactively out of the need to complete the task, rather than passively responding to teacher instructions.

Next is human-machine interaction. Within the framework of CLT, AI-powered conversational tools like ChatGPT have introduced a revolutionary human-machine interaction model to language education. This interaction offers three key advantages: timely feedback, realistic scenarios, and psychological safety. On one hand, this real-time feedback mechanism effectively enhances students' engagement in learning. On the other hand, ChatGPT can simulate various authentic communicative scenarios. Additionally, ChatGPT's anonymous interaction feature creates a relatively relaxed and safe psychological environment, reducing anxiety about language output and encouraging students to actively attempt to communicate in English[6].

3.2.3. Emotion-Driven Participatory Learning

CLT emphasizes the communicative principle of "meaning first," linking learning content to students' lives. This "demand-driven" learning motivation far exceeds the "exam-driven" motivation of traditional classrooms. In addition, teachers need to connect with students' emotional needs, allow sufficient time for independent thinking, be tolerant of students' growth, and create a learning environment where students feel secure, respected, trusted, and satisfied, thereby promoting their active participation in course activities[7].

4. The Practical Limitations of CLT under the Dual Demands of Core Competency Development and Examination Preparation

4.1. The Discrepancy between Theory and Practice

4.1.1. The Paradox of Grammar Instruction

The Communicative Approach advocates cultivating language proficiency through "implicit grammar instruction," a philosophy that aligns with the core competency of "language ability developed through practice" outlined in the high school English curriculum. However, the "precise assessment" of grammar in Gaokao English poses a practical challenge. Take the 2024 national exam's grammar fill-in-the-blank section as an example: the questions require students to distinguish between "relative pronouns in attributive clauses" and "non-verbal verb forms," among other subtle rules, which rely on explicit mastery of grammatical knowledge. Under CLT's implicit teaching model, students can use grammar correctly in communication but struggle to explain the rules—for example, they can correctly use the present perfect progressive tense to describe ongoing actions (I've been studying English for three years), but cannot explain the structural function of "have been + doing." This contradiction between "being able to use it but not being able to explain it" leaves teachers caught between "cultivating literacy" and "improving test scores": emphasizing implicit integration increases the risk of low scores on grammar questions, while reverting to explicit explanations deviates from the principles of communicative teaching.

4.1.2. The Paradox of Authenticity in Communicative Situations

The Communicative Approach emphasizes the creation of "authentic language use scenarios," arguing that language learning only becomes meaningful in real-life communicative contexts. It thus aims for students to transfer what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations. However, there is a disconnect between "classroom simulations" and "authentic use": first, contextual simplification. To reduce difficulty, classroom tasks often predefine single, clear communicative goals, whereas real-life scenarios require language to address complex variables; second, feedback differences. In the classroom, feedback from teachers or peers focuses on language form, but in real-life communication, feedback prioritizes content achievement. The "perfect expressions" students learn in the classroom may fail in real-life scenarios due to the absence of "strategic communication"; third, misaligned motivation. The "false communicative motivation" of classroom tasks cannot replace the "survival-driven motivation" of real-life scenarios. Therefore, this situation often manifests as "generic contextualization," i.e., "no context, no teaching" and the overuse of "one-size-fits-all" contexts[8]. The more one emphasizes "simulating reality," the more the gap between the classroom and reality is exposed, ultimately reducing communication to a formalized activity "for the sake of communication."

4.2. Challenges in Teaching Implementation

4.2.1. Class Hour Restrictions

CLT advocates "deep communicative tasks" (such as project-based learning and extended dialogue negotiation), which require ample time for students to engage in language output and meaning negotiation. However, high school English instruction is constrained by the "Gaokao preparation schedule," necessitating a significant portion of class time for "exam format-specific training." Taking the schedule of a senior high school in a key high school as an example, out of the six regular English classes per week, four are dedicated to "in-depth explanation and practice of Gaokao question types," leaving only two for comprehensive teaching. Under this class schedule allocation, CLT communicative tasks often face the dilemma of being "fragmented," which forces teaching to choose between "competency cultivation" and "exam preparation." Data shows that 82% of high school English teachers report that "due to time constraints, they have no choice but to reduce the depth of CLT tasks." This conflict between "time-consuming tasks" and "efficient exam preparation" fundamentally stems from the contradiction between the time required for cultivating literacy and the demand for exam score improvements, making it challenging to sustainably advance CLT in high school classrooms.

4.2.2. Contradictions in the Evaluation System

CLT aims for "open communicative goals," emphasizing the "appropriateness,

effectiveness, and creativity" of language use. However, Gaokao English employs "standardized testing," primarily consisting of objective questions (grammar, reading) and semi-objective questions (writing, reading comprehension continuation), with scoring relying on "standard answers" or "scoring criteria." Take reading comprehension continuation writing as an example: Gaokao requires "plausible plots, elegant language, and alignment with the original text's style," but the "personalized plot innovation" advocated by CLT may be penalized for "deviating from conventional expectations." Thus, under this evaluation system, the following issues may arise: on one hand, teachers lack motivation. Given the importance of Gaokao scores in the current system, teachers tend to focus on training students in question types that can be standardized for scoring, rather than investing long-term effort in CLT's open-ended tasks; on the other hand, students may develop learning biases. Students who have long been exposed to "standardized evaluation" may unconsciously focus their language learning on "scoring points" (such as complex sentence structures and advanced vocabulary) rather than "communicative competence" (such as clear expression and effective communication). This "goal-evaluation" dichotomy has trapped CLT in a "teaching-testing disconnect" dilemma in high school English education—classrooms attempt to cultivate communicative competence, but exams cannot effectively assess it, ultimately leading to "oscillation and compromise" in teaching practices.

4.3. Challenges in Teacher-Student Roles

4.3.1. Practical Challenges in Transforming Teachers' Roles

In traditional teaching, teachers have always served as the "center of knowledge transmission." CLT is a brand-new teaching method where teachers don't just lecture in class. Their role changes to being organizers, facilitators, or communication coordinators[9], taking on multiple roles like analyzing needs, designing activities, and promoting classroom interaction. This transformation is basically a restructuring of the power relationship in teaching—teachers need to give up their absolute control over language forms and instead encourage students to build knowledge on their own through meaning negotiation. For example, in the "cross-cultural debate" task, teachers must transition from traditional "grammar correctors" to "communication process facilitators," focusing on how students express their views through interaction rather than fixating on sentence structure accuracy. However, in reality, 85% of high school English teachers still prefer to dominate the classroom as "knowledge authorities." This inertia stems from two constraints: first, the pressure from the exam-oriented evaluation system. Gaokao's rigorous assessment of grammar and vocabulary forces teachers to retain their role as "explicit knowledge explainers"; second, a gap in role-specific competencies. CLT requires teachers to possess new competencies such as cross-cultural

communication strategy guidance and dynamic classroom management, but the absence of relevant training in teacher education programs leaves some teachers unable to effectively guide students in open communication tasks.

4.3.2. The Dilemma of Cultivating Students' Autonomous Communicative Competence under Examination-Oriented Education

Long-term standardized training has led students to develop an "examination-oriented language cognition," equating English learning with "knowledge memorization + question-type problem-solving" rather than "meaning construction + social interaction." In communicative tasks, students often mechanically apply templates to complete tasks and tend to use simple sentence structures they have already mastered in free communication. However, communicative language teaching advocates transforming learners into active learners and explorers, taking on the role of negotiators in communicative processes, and requiring students to develop autonomous abilities such as goal-setting, strategy adjustment, and peer evaluation. However, in exam-oriented education, the development of these abilities lags significantly behind in terms of tasks, metacognition, and evaluation. Therefore, the challenges associated with changes in teacher-student roles may contribute to a vicious cycle in classroom interaction, as illustrated in Figure 1.

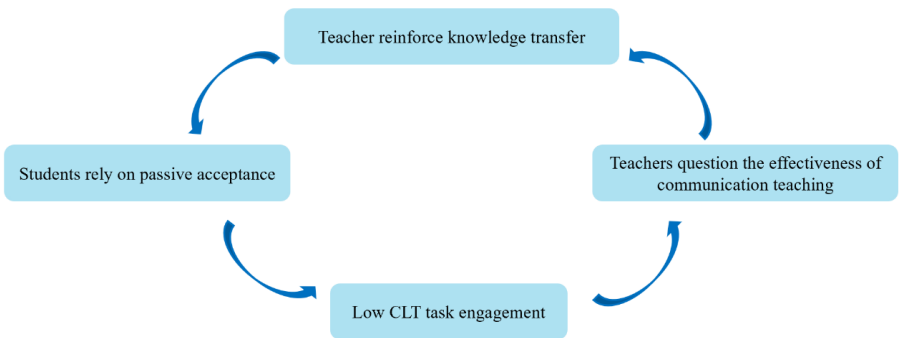


Figure 1. The Vicious Cycle of Teacher-Student Interaction in Examination-Oriented English Teaching

5. Improvement Strategies for CLT in Senior High School English Teaching

5.1. Theoretical Integration and Innovation

5.1.1. Reconstruction of Communicative Tasks Based on a Three-Dimensional Grammar Framework

Three-dimensional grammar guides students in learning grammatical items from three dimensions: structure, function, and pragmatics, enabling them to learn by using and use by learning[10]. It emphasizes that grammar instruction must simultaneously focus on formal correctness, expressive meaning, and contextual appropriateness. The integration of this theory with communicative language

teaching effectively addresses the challenge of "form detached from use" in traditional grammar instruction. Therefore, communicative task reconstruction based on the three-dimensional grammar framework can focus on the synergistic interaction of "form-function-pragmatics." Taking the "The Value of Money" unit from the People's Education Press English textbook as an example: By constructing a pragmatic context through the "Million Pound" drama festival (e.g., tailor shop, hotel scenes), students perceive the structural features of modal verbs (e.g., "should" indicating suggestion) and past future tense (e.g., "was going to" indicating past plans) through Henry's experiences; Utilizing multimodal inputs such as dialogue listening and plot texts, the "form-meaning" connection is reinforced (e.g., comparing the polite function of "could ask" with the past intention of "would give"); Through a graded design of "picture fill-in (semi-controlled exercises) → to-do list Q&A (communicative tasks)," achieve a transition from grammatical internalization to pragmatic application. This reconstruction breaks away from the traditional "rule explanation + mechanical practice" model, making grammar learning an organic component of contextualized communication, aligning with the Curriculum Standards' requirement to "develop grammatical competence through use."

5.1.2. Integration of Task-Based Language Teaching and Content-Based Instruction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes "learning language through the completion of real-world tasks," while Content-Based Instruction (CBI) advocates "using subject-specific content as a vehicle to develop language proficiency as its core focus." The latter holds significant importance in breaking down the separation between language and knowledge, fostering higher-order thinking skills, and cultivating cross-cultural competence[11]. In the new Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press high school English textbooks, the synergistic innovation of TBLT and CBI is exemplified in the teaching practice of Unit 1 "Food for Thought" in the compulsory second-year textbook: During the CBI content input phase, using the text "A Child of Two Cuisines" from the textbook as a vehicle, students are guided to explore the integration of Chinese and British culinary cultures, mastering dietary vocabulary such as "hot pot," " dairy-free," and idioms like "one man's meat is another man's poison," while also understanding the theoretical implications of traditional Chinese medicine's concept of "heat inside the body," thereby integrating language knowledge with cross-cultural content; In the TBLT task execution phase, based on the "Surveying eating habits" project on page 97 of the textbook, a "comparative survey of Chinese and Western culinary cultures" task was designed—students were required to interview family and friends to collect dietary cases, create bilingual survey reports, and analyze the connections between "ingredient selection-cooking methods-cultural implications." During classroom presentations, they responded to questions using comparative sentence structures like "while.../unlike..." and other comparative sentence structures to address

questions. Through the task cycle of "interviewing and researching—report writing—debate presentation," students transform the cultural content input through CBI into language output skills, achieving the three-dimensional objectives of "content understanding—language application—cross-cultural critical thinking."

5.2. Technology-Enabled Practice

5.2.1. ChatGPT Simulates the Authenticity of Cross-Cultural Dialogue Scenarios

ChatGPT is based on a large-scale pre-trained language model that can generate responses appropriate for cross-cultural contexts by understanding the context. Its advantages are as follows: First, dynamic context generation. Based on the earthquake rescue scenario in Unit 6 "Disaster and Hope" of FLTRP's Compulsory Course 3, a task such as "coordinating international rescue teams" can be set, and the AI will generate communication strategies in real time for different cultural backgrounds, addressing the disconnect between static dialogue templates in traditional textbooks and real-life communication. Second, an error feedback mechanism. When students use non-native expressions such as "Could you give me the water?", the AI compares them with a corpus of native speaker data to generate correction suggestions accompanied by cultural explanations. Taking the environmental theme of Unit 6 "Earth First" in Compulsory Course 2 as an example, students learn terms like "carbon footprint" and "renewable energy" through textbook texts to understand the scientific principles of global warming; using ChatGPT to build a simulated "United Nations Climate Summit" scenario, students play the roles of representatives from different countries negotiating emission reduction plans, with AI generating dynamic negotiation scripts based on role settings (e.g., representatives from small island nations must emphasize survival crises, while representatives from developed countries must balance economic interests); Meanwhile, to enhance realism, the AI inserts unexpected scenarios in real time (e.g., "the opposing representative suddenly quotes the local proverb 'We have no alternative but to act now'"), forcing students to employ cross-cultural communication strategies (e.g., using a metaphorical equivalent translation of "burning the boats" to respond), thereby addressing the limitations of pre-scripted dialogues in traditional role-playing exercises.

5.2.2. Quantitative Assessment of Communicative Competence and Its Articulation with Gaokao Evaluation

In high school English education, intelligent assessment systems can establish a multidimensional indicator system to achieve the integration of communication skills development and college entrance examination evaluation. This system is based on the three-dimensional framework of the curriculum standards and establishes a quantitative model from the following three dimensions: First, language accuracy. For example, in the debate speech from Unit 3 of FLTRP's Compulsory Course 1, the system can identify and mark tense errors such as "would

say," helping students correct language mistakes. Second, cultural appropriateness. For example, in the text "Click for a Friend?", the system assesses students' understanding of cross-cultural metaphors to ensure they can accurately use culturally relevant expressions in communication. Third, logical thinking. For example, in debates, the system analyzes the accuracy of logical word usage to help students improve their logical thinking skills. Taking Unit 3 of FLTRP Course 1 as an example, the intelligent assessment system marks template-based expressions in written expression and prompts students to engage in academic argumentation, which aligns with the "argument depth" scoring criteria for the college entrance examination's written expression section. In reading comprehension, the system generates personalized training tasks through semantic misjudgment analysis to help students improve their reading comprehension skills. For non-oral exam regions, the system converts communicative strategy data into training criteria for pragmatic appropriateness in cloze tests, further enhancing students' language application abilities. Assessment results can be automatically matched with textbook resources. For example, for "cross-cultural misunderstandings," the system recommends cultural comparison tasks from Compulsory Course 2 Unit 1, using "exam point mapping" to convert assessment data into college entrance exam competencies.

5.3. Reconstruction of Teaching Evaluation

5.3.1. Dual-track Assessment of Formative Communicative Performance and Gaokao Competence

The Ministry of Education's 2004 English Curriculum Teaching Requirements states that "we must shift away from a purely assessment-based model and instead use students' comprehensive language proficiency as the starting point for assessment. We must organically integrate formative and summative assessment, with a particular focus on formative assessment[12]. Therefore, based on teaching practices using FLTRP textbooks, we must construct a dual-track integrated framework of "formative assessment + summative assessment." This approach aims to shift the focus from knowledge assessment to competency evaluation. Formative communicative performance evaluation is based on authentic task scenarios from textbook units, with a core focus on "dynamic communicative behavior observation + text output analysis," forming differentiated evaluation dimensions, including contextualized language use, cross-cultural mediation ability, and argument visualization assessment. The evaluation of college entrance examination test-taking abilities establishes a conversion mechanism between textbook practice and college entrance examination test points. Taking the discussion activity on "The New Age of Invention" from Unit 3 of FLTRP's Compulsory Course 3, "The World of Science," as an example, students are required to write a short science and technology essay based on their learning about how ancient and modern inventions have driven

social progress. The scoring criteria for this activity closely align with the "content richness" requirements of the college entrance examination's written expression section. Teachers guide students through classroom group discussions to analyze the use of vocabulary in context. For terminology pairing errors made by students, teachers utilize the textbook's terminology list and example sentences to conduct concentrated error correction and reinforcement exercises, establishing a "classroom error analysis-textbook terminology consolidation-writing improvement training" pathway for exam preparation enhancement.

5.3.2. Designing Gaokao Questions Integrating Real-Life Contexts and Subject Knowledge

The competency-oriented question reform is guided by the curriculum standards and focuses on the "comprehensive application of subject knowledge in real-life contexts." Through question type innovation, it achieves a transition from "knowledge assessment" to "competency evaluation." In terms of context integration, the questions are closely linked to real life and the forefront of the subject. For example, based on the "Food for Thought" theme from Unit 1 of FLTRP's Compulsory Course 2, a task titled "Cross-Cultural Promotion Copywriting for an International Food Festival" was designed. Students are required to use vocabulary such as "dairy-free" and "food as medicine," and combine the differences between Chinese and Western diets to write promotional copy. Scoring considers language appropriateness (40%), cultural mediation strategies (30%), and logical coherence (30%). In terms of interdisciplinary integration, the exam breaks away from single-language assessment to evaluate cross-disciplinary thinking. Using the content from Unit 3 of the Compulsory Course 3 on the history of technological inventions as material, a reading question on the "logic of technological invention evolution" was designed. Terms such as 'invention' and "innovation" were combined with inventions from various periods, requiring students to organize the textual timeline and causal logic, thereby assessing both language comprehension and understanding of technological development. Finally, the new question design emphasizes the integration of diverse skills. By introducing open-ended essay questions (e.g., "Discuss the impact of artificial intelligence development on future education"), task-driven writing (e.g., "Design a smart elderly care service plan for the community"), and multimodal integration questions (e.g., writing an English summary for a technology achievement launch event), a three-dimensional assessment system covering language application, cultural awareness, and thinking quality is constructed. These question types are all based on textbook themes, with scoring criteria aligned with core competencies, promoting deep synergy between college entrance examination evaluation and teaching.

6. Conclusion

This study is grounded in the practical realities of high school English education,

systematically reviewing the theory of CLT to establish a three-dimensional breakthrough framework of "theoretical integration - technological empowerment - assessment reconstruction." The research findings indicate that integrating the three-dimensional grammatical framework with task-based and content-based teaching methods can effectively resolve the inherent contradiction in CLT of prioritizing communication over exam preparation. Additionally, the integration of CLT with AI tools demonstrates the potential to overcome the limitations of authentic communication in the classroom. For example, using ChatGPT to simulate cross-cultural scenarios can enable students to more frequently employ communicative strategies while alleviating language expression anxiety, thereby providing a new pathway to narrow the gap in English teaching resources between urban and rural areas. This exploration breaks traditional teaching boundaries, highlighting the profound value of technology-driven educational equity and teaching innovation. Although a framework for breaking through CLT barriers has been established, there is still room for expansion in both theoretical and practical dimensions. Future research could include longitudinal tracking of the sustained impact of CLT on students' language development after entering university, as well as cross-cultural comparative studies on the implementation of CLT in high schools across different countries and cultural contexts. These directions hold promise for contributing Chinese insights to balancing "standardized assessment and personalized cultivation" in global language education. It is anticipated that through interdisciplinary collaboration, further exploration will drive the transformation of high school English teaching paradigms and theoretical iterations, continuously unlocking the practical value and social significance of this research.

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