

A Comparison of Discourse Scaffolding between Novice and Expert English Teachers in Senior High Schools from the Perspective of Social Culture Theory

Wen Xiangping^{1,a,*}, Zhu Xiaodong^{1,b}

¹Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, Jiangxi, China

^a2898321502@qq.com, ^b314084090@qq.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: Guided by Vygotsky's social culture theory, this paper makes a comparative analysis of six types of scaffolding used by novice and expert English senior high teachers, taking classroom discourse of novice and expert English senior high teachers as the research corpus, to summarize and find some problems of discourse scaffolding that teachers have encountered in teaching, then put forward corresponding improvement suggestions.

Keywords: Social Culture Theory; Classroom Discourse; Scaffolding

1. Introduction

In the 1990s, inspired by Marxist dialectics, Vygotsky established "Social Culture Theory", which emphasized that social culture and social communication play a key role in the development of an individual's advanced psychological functions. In 2017, the Implementation Outline of Ideological and Political Work Quality Improvement Project in Colleges and Universities issued by the Ministry of Education pointed out that colleges and universities should vigorously carry out the educational reform with the goal of "ideological and political education in the curriculum", and actively cultivate and practice the core socialist values, and use the Marxist methodology to guide students to be comprehensive development. And "social and cultural theory" strongly supports the practice of "ideological and political education in the curriculum". At the same time, "Social Culture Theory" puts forward three core concepts of "intermediary, internalization, and zone of proximal development" around the individual's advanced psychological development functions. On this basis, scaffolding teaching theory came into being, which emphasizes that learners are the center, teachers play a scaffolding and leading role. Through effective interaction, students' autonomous learning ability and problem-solving ability can be cultivated. In the classroom, the interaction between teachers and students is mainly realized through teacher discourse. Hankinson(1986) pointed out that the quality and quantity of teacher discourse affects the success of classroom teaching [1]. The latest English curriculum standard for senior high schools puts forward the multi-objective of developing the core quality of the subject. In the new era, foreign language teachers should focus on the classroom and cultivate students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability [2]. The application of teacher's scaffolding discourse in English classroom teaching meets the needs of curriculum reform.

Based on the background, this study is guided by Vygotsky's social and cultural theory, takes the classroom discourse of novice and expert senior high school English teachers as the research corpus, and makes a comparative analysis of classroom discourse scaffolding of three novice and three expert senior high school English teachers in Ganzhou, aiming at understanding the similarities and differences between the use of classroom discourse scaffolding of novice and expert senior high school English teachers. This paper summarizes and finds out some problems that six teachers' discourse scaffolding construction in classroom teaching, and puts forward corresponding improvement suggestions, so as to promote senior high school English teachers, especially novice teachers, to attach importance to the construction of classroom discourse scaffolding.

2. Teacher's Discourse Scaffolding

Scaffolding theory originated from ZPD (zone of proximal development) proposed by Vygotsky (1978). He proposed that learners have an actual level, and in the process of learning, learners need to reach a potential level. The gap between the actual and potential development level of learners is ZPD [3]. Based on this, Bruner, a famous American psychologist and educator, borrowed the word "scaffold" in architecture and put forward the scaffolding theory. He believed that with the help of skilled experts or peers, novices could develop new abilities, accept new ideas or improve their comprehensive ability. That is, by constructing the scaffold, learners can leap from the actual development level to the potential development level. In English class, English teacher discourse is not only used to provide language input and language paradigm, but also to organize class and guide students. According to Van de Pol's (2010) classification of discourse scaffolding, this study divides six teachers' discourse scaffolding in classroom into four types: implied scaffolding, questioning scaffolding, feedback scaffolding and demonstration scaffolding. Among them, implied scaffolding refers to teachers helping students solve problems and complete tasks by providing clues or key information, in other words, teachers don't provide specific details and guidance. Questioning scaffolding refers to a specific language knowledge point in the teaching process. Ask questions to check whether students have mastered the knowledge points of the language. Feedback scaffolding refers to teachers' timely evaluation based on students' classroom performance and classroom answers, including positive feedback and negative feedback and error correction. A demonstration scaffolding is a model in that teachers provide students with imitative examples before they finish their tasks, which helps students reduce the difficulty of tasks [4].

3. The Comparisons of Classroom Discourse Scaffolding

According to the classroom observation, the author transformed five lessons of six teachers form videos into texts, cut out the corresponding fragments, and combined with after-class interview records, to compare the four types of discourse scaffolding used by six teachers in classroom. Then draw the following conclusions.

3.1. Comparison of Implied Scaffolding

Through the function of the implied scaffolding in the classroom discourse of expert teachers and novice teachers, it is found that novice teachers constructed implied scaffolding by providing key information or present part of the content as a channel, and it mainly to simplify the task, mark the key features and maintain the established goals. However, most of the novice teachers' implied scaffolds are based on the teaching mode and teaching content, and they rarely adjust the scaffold's construction form for students' classroom participation and reaction. Although it promotes students' knowledge accumulation and cognitive development, it has a little emotional effect and fails to realize the emotional function of implied scaffolding. In classroom teaching, expert teachers set up implied scaffolding for students by setting suspense, creating situations and using body language and expressions, so that students can give full play to their subjective initiative in real situations, constantly promotes the output ability of language, and realizes the development of cognition. At the same time, the expert teachers provide the key information or omission of keywords to imply students the errors in language output. By setting suspense and using body language, expert teachers can stimulate students' desire for knowledge, and make students actively participate in classroom interaction.

3.2. Comparison of Questioning Scaffolding

Based on the analysis of the function of the questioning scaffold, six teachers' questioning scaffolds are mainly used to realize the cognitive function, supplemented by emotional function. Among them, the questioning scaffolds set up by novice teachers for students are mostly closed questions and simple questions, which can't arouse the development of students' cognitive level or maintain students' enthusiasm for expression, their language expression ability can't be developed. The novice teacher's questioning scaffolding is only for the completion of classroom teaching, ignoring the actual needs of students, which leads to low efficiency of classroom interaction and does not reflect the function of the scaffolding well. Through specific fragment analysis, it can be seen that expert teachers can flexibly change the way of asking questions based on students' actual needs, and the questions are mostly referential and open-ended. At the same time, based on the students' ZPD, they take advantage of the

situation, create opportunities for students to output language by questioning, explaining and promoting, and guide students to think independently about questions, to help students achieve a higher level of development.

3.3. Comparison of Feedback Scaffolding

Through the analysis of the feedback scaffolding of novice teachers and expert teachers, it is found that the feedback scaffolding of six teachers has achieved the function of suppressing negative emotions. Among them, in the form of feedback, novice teachers mainly gave priority to evaluative feedback, mostly simple affirm or direct negate the students and they focused on the language form rather than the specific content of students' answers; In error correction, students' mistakes corrected directly instead of allowing students to correct themselves. The novice teacher's feedback scaffolding had a single function, It didn't pay enough attention to students' emotions, which is not conducive to the improvement of students' language output ability and the communication between teachers and students. On the other hand, expert teachers were flexible and diverse in the form of feedback and could make corresponding adjustments based on students' reactions and classroom teaching situations. At the same time, positive feedback to students was mainly to maintain self-confidence, while negative feedback was mainly to give indirect hints. The content of feedback was based on the students' answers, and it was specifically evaluated in detail, which triggered new topics to stimulate students' enthusiasm to continuous output. At the same time, expert teachers indirectly guided students to find mistakes through rhetorical questions, demonstration, repetition and other strategies, and to correct themselves through continuous questioning, which can maintains students' enthusiasm.

3.4. Comparison of Demonstration Scaffolding

By analyzing the statistics of classroom discourse scaffolding of novice teachers and expert teachers, it is found that novice teachers used demonstration scaffolding less than expert teachers, and the function of demonstration scaffolding is mainly cognitive function. For example, when students encountered difficulties in the output of target vocabulary or sentence patterns in classroom interaction and expression, novice teachers provided students with imitations by using intuitive and concrete examples or oral explanations. Although it helps students reduce the difficulty of the task, and guides students to pay attention to the task. However, what novice teachers build for students Most of the demonstration scaffolding mainly focused on teaching materials, which are divorced from students' real life and can't arouse students' emotions. Students can only imitate the example given by the teacher step by step, the example expressed by the real failure to understand the meaning ultimately leads to low efficiency of students' language input and output, low classroom interaction and novice teachers do not promote students' cognitive development well through demonstration scaffolding. Compared with novice teachers, the establishment of expert teachers' demonstration scaffolding not only promotes the development of students' cognitive levels but also meets students' emotional needs. Seeking, giving good consideration to the development of cognition and emotion. The construction of an expert teacher demonstration scaffolding is mainly for students. Subject, based on students' learned knowledge and interest in learning, combined with questioning scaffolding, creates real feelings for students. At the same time, expert teachers should be close to students' actual life. Give vivid examples and demonstrations to guide students to actively construct the connection with old and new knowledge, and promote the divergence of students' thinking. It also increases the opportunities for students' language output, so that students can understand the meaning expressed by the language in interactive practice.

4. Analysis of Existing Problems and Causes

It is found that all six teachers build discourse scaffolding for students in different degrees, and teachers' different types of discourse scaffolding have a very important influence on students. But through case analysis and interview records, It is found that problems still exists in the teaching process of teachers, especially for novice teachers. Such as Single form, weak scaffolding emotional function, less attention to students' emotions, and teachers' inability to be timely and appropriately. The problems of setting up scaffolding leads to students' weak interest in learning, weak language output, and weak cognitive ability. There are similarities and differences between expert teachers and novice teachers in their understanding of scaffolding discourse. Both expert teachers and novice teachers recognize the importance of scaffolding discourse in English class, and both say that scaffolding discourse will be used more often in class. Expert teachers reflect on their scaffolding discourse more timely and

comprehensively, and the focus of reflection lies in the overall development of students' language levels. Novice teachers will focus on the demonstration or observation class and pay more attention to students' understanding of vocabulary, syntax, or articles. And, there are differences in the factors considered by expert teachers and novice teachers when using scaffolding discourse. Novice teachers rely more on pre-class design, and promote the whole class smoothly according to their teaching design in class, while expert teachers will flexibly use scaffolding discourse according to students' actual performance. Compared with novice teachers, expert teachers will comprehensively consider many factors when using scaffolding discourse, such as the difficulty of learning materials, students' personalities, and teacher-student relationships.

5. Suggestions on Building Discourse Scaffolding

Based on the problems and shortcomings of novice teachers in setting up discourse scaffolding in classroom teaching, this paper puts forward the following suggestions on how novice teachers should reasonably and moderately set up discourse scaffolding for students.

5.1. Grasping the Students' ZPD

Constructivism emphasizes that teachers' teaching must be based on students' existing cognitive level, combined with students' existing knowledge and experience have found students' ZPD, and they should always pay attention to students' learning situation in order to be more accurate. Accurately understand and grasp the students' ZPD, so as to adapt to the dynamics of students' needs. Teachers should give full consideration to students' ZPD when constructing discourse scaffolding in English teaching, and construct reasonable scaffolding in the zone of proximal development, to ensure that teachers' discourse scaffolding can promote students' cognitive and emotional development to the maximum extent. Based on students' ZPD, teachers should be good at creating problem situations for students by using discourse scaffolding and then guide students to learn to think independently in different situations and help them acquire new knowledge. At the same time, teachers can also set reasonable questions and tasks for students in their ZPD, and help students reduce the difficulty through teaching scaffolding, so that students can reach the potential development zone through independent thinking. When students reach the corresponding potential development level, teachers can build scaffolding on this basis to help students cross the ZPD and finally promote the development of student's cognitive level. When the teacher's scaffolding doesn't play a corresponding role, it means that the teacher's scaffolding falls outside the students' ZPD and the scaffolding is ineffective. However, the "ineffective scaffolding" lays a foundation for teachers to build scaffolding in the later period and also provides a reference for establishing the reasonable scaffolding of students' ZPD, to improve the effectiveness of the scaffolding.

5.2. Focusing on the Students' Emotional Needs

Ellis(2003) emphasized that the discourse scaffolding used by teachers in classroom teaching should conform to students' cognition needs, and pay attention to students' emotional changes, both of which are indispensable [5]. Therefore, in English classroom teaching, the construction of teacher's discourse scaffolding can not only provide students with a large amount of comprehensible language input, but also create more opportunities for students to output and express, and help students realize the transition from "others' regulation" to "self-regulation", to promote the construction and internalization of knowledge and the development of cognitive ability. At the same time, the construction of teachers' discourse scaffolding should also stimulate students' learning motivation, increase their interest in learning, ease the tense classroom atmosphere and meet students' emotional needs. Therefore, before setting up the scaffolding, teachers can communicate with students, fully understand students' interests and emotional needs, and lay the foundation for cultivating students' positive learning emotions. When setting up scaffolding in classroom teaching, teachers should be good at using the appeal of scaffolding, finding out students' interests, and creating a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere, so as to relieve students' tension, provide motivation for students' learning, and arouse students' emotional resonance. When students have cognitive difficulties, teachers should pay attention to students' emotional changes, provide positive feedback or demonstration scaffolding in time, maintain students' enthusiasm for language output, eliminate students' negative psychology, and guide students to find the gap between their current level and ideal plan, so as to achieve a higher level and enhance their self-confidence in learning.

5.3. Increasing students' classroom participation

In classroom teaching, teachers, as guides, actually dominate and control the progress of the whole classroom teaching. Therefore, the interaction between teachers and students is still centered and dominated by teachers, and teachers' excessive scaffolding in the classroom is easy to disturb the development of students independent language [6]. Although teachers' classroom discourse scaffolding helps students complete their learning tasks and realize the construction of new knowledge, the excessive use of scaffolding in teacher-student interaction will lead to learners passively accepting knowledge, relying on teachers' help and adjustment, unable to complete the language construction and knowledge internalization alone, and unable to realize self-adjustment and transition. Therefore, in English class, teachers should change the traditional "indoctrination" concept and the teaching mode of "teachers teach and students listen". They should be student-centered, make full use of situations, questions, demonstrations and feedback to help students construct new knowledge, encourage students to participate in classroom interaction, and guide students to actively acquire the target language. At the same time, teachers help students to know the gap between the current level and the target language as guides when setting up scaffolding for students, guide students to learn self-regulation, and encourage them to think and complete their learning tasks independently. When students can complete the transition from "others' regulation" to "self-regulation", teachers should remove the scaffolding in time, change the role of "guide", assist students to explore independently, and realize the development of autonomous learning ability. In short, to change the traditional teaching mode, improve the efficiency of English classroom teaching and enhance the classroom interaction between teachers and students, teachers need to change the traditional dominant position, take students as the main body, respect students' subjective initiative, accurately grasp students' "zone of proximal development" and existing cognitive level, and build a reasonable scaffolding to promote students' cognitive and emotional development.

6. Conclusions

Based on social and cultural theory, It is found that novice teachers and expert teachers have similarities and differences in the distribution characteristics of classroom discourse scaffolding. Therefore, to solve the problems of novice teachers' discourse scaffolding construction in classroom teaching and to further promote teachers, especially novice teachers, to pay attention to and use classroom discourse scaffolding reasonably, this study gives the following suggestions: First, teacher should grasp the students' ZPD; Second, teacher should improve the effectiveness of discourse scaffolding, pay attention to students' emotional needs, and increase the emotional function of discourse scaffolding; Third, increase students' participation and change teachers' role in class.

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