

The Guidance and Application of Second Language Acquisition Theory on University English Teaching

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Abstract: *The second language acquisition theory is a comprehensive theoretical system, which not only involves the scientific research on learning behaviors, but also includes the psychological state, brain and neural mechanism of learners in the process of studying a second language. At present, scholars specializing in the related realms classify it as a social science in most of situation, but some scholars also classify it as a humanities or a natural science. Its application scope involves the education, educational psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, etc. And it has a certain guiding role in university English teaching. The research on university English teaching under the guidance of this theory can improve the enthusiasm and effectiveness on English learning of college and university students. This article studies the interaction between the second language acquisition theory and the university English teaching, focusing on the guidance and comprehensive application of these two elements. By analyzing the English teaching of colleges and universities in this way, it can provide a new research perspective on improving the quality of English classroom teaching for college and university students.*

Keywords: *Second language acquisition; College English; Language system*

1. Introduction

“The second language learning and studying”, also known as “Second Language Acquisition Theory”, is generally referred as the theory of a foreign language acquisition other than the mother tongue. The theoretical system consists of multiple components, including different theories such as the innate theory, the environment theory and the interaction theory. These convincing theories expound the relevant factors and the application methods of the second language learning from different perspectives. For example, the environment theory believes that language learning depends on the external language environment rather than originating from innate conditions. On the contrary, the innate theory believes that language learning is an innate ability, rooted in the inherent mechanism of the brain and formed habits. In cognition, the interaction theory is similar to the principles of “Connection” and “The internal and external causes in interaction relationship” in dialectics. These principles believe that the language acquisition does not only rely on internal factors and the factors derived from innate or acquired language environment, but is also a development state achieved from the combined results of interaction and mutual influence. Only when internal elements and external environment combined with each other and their frequency are consistent can the conditions and environments be generated, and further help learners to study a foreign language. Conversely, if internal factors and external circumstances are not effectively integrated, a hindrance force will be generated^[1].

At the same time, the language acquisition always will be inseparable from the personal background, experience, motivation, emotions and other factors. Whether or not the theory can achieve practical results depends on the effective integration of internal factors and external environment. Only by improving learners' ability in a suitable teaching environment can the really play a positive guiding role in the effectiveness of learners' second language acquisition.

2. English Learning Situation in College and University Students

2.1 Requirements

2.1.1 Focus on Practicality

English is the most commonly used languages worldwide. Therefore, colleges and universities should focus on the practical use and application on their English studying and teaching. Teachers should create an authentic language environment, improve students' language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the specialized English knowledge should be integrated into corresponding majors for cultivating their professional qualities^[2].

2.1.2 Task of Cultural Transmission

Language and culture are closely linked, teachers should take the advantage of their educational methods to transmit the essence of Western culture, and enhance the cross-cultural communication skills of students. This can also shape a correct global perspective for college students, and evoke their awareness of international competition.

2.1.3 Integration of Digital Technologies

With the development of digital technology, digital language education has also been popularized rapidly. Tools such as adaptive learning platforms, online English-Chinese dictionaries, and video lessons can help college students study English in an efficient learning state.

2.1.4 Comprehensive Quality of Learners

English education is not only about a language skill, but also needs to be integrated with various disciplines for improving students' interdisciplinary competence and encouraging them to participate in relevant teamwork and social practice, making them more competitive and innovative.

2.2 English Learning Mode

With the deepening of globalization, English, as the lingua franca, has become a capability for college students. Good English skills can not only help them enter the international horizon, but also evoke the awareness on competing with the risk resistance, and occupy an advantageous position in their future career development. The current English learning modes of college and university students are as follows.

2.2.1 Self-directed Learning

Independent learning means that students can arrange their time and space to study English and achieve the learning purpose by completing the plan by themselves. Its biggest advantage is that he or she can organize an education program capable for one's learning progress according to learning situation, needs and interests for achieving the accurate learning results and save costs and time. Herein, students are responsible for their own learning, time management and task allocation.

However, it is not a learning methods that all students can adapt to, it requires a high degree of self-planning and self-discipline, an ability to think and solve problems independently. Since this mode does not have a specified time and space, and it requires students to find suitable resources by themselves, it is easy to make them falling into a confusion or an anxiety in this process, and bringing instability that will be manifested in their learning outcomes.

2.2.2 Classroom Learning

Classroom learning is an extremely common, formal, and traditional way of learning. Most colleges and universities will have professional English courses, and arrange standard teaching plans, teaching resources, teaching materials according to subject regulations. Its strict system and standardized process enable students to receive more systematic language skills training, so that students can accurately understand and use English grammar and words, and master the basic English language skills. In addition, it can also improve the diversity and communication skills on English by the interaction with their teacher and peers^[3].

There are also some drawbacks in it. First of all, students' learning progress is limited by teaching progress. They may not be fully adapted to the teaching and its teaching methods. Language learning is a dynamic process that requires timely communication and observation for truly understanding English

thinking mode, and classroom learning may not meet this need. In addition, some textbooks lack practical orientation in language expression, which makes students confused when guided by them.

2.2.3 Language Communication

Language communication refers to the learning method in which students improving their language qualities such as speaking and listening in their daily dialogue, interaction and discussion with others. Communication can be a challenging but popular and fun way to learn a language. By communicating with native English-speakers, students can greatly improve their speaking skills, shaping their language and thinking mode of English in practical applications, and obtain timely feedback and self-correction.

However, it also has some limitations. If two individuals with the same language level, the progress may not be equally noticeable; However, for college students who are not sophisticated with their spoken English, communicating with native English-speakers might be challenging. The undeniable fact is, language communication cannot completely replace other learning modes. Therefore, it is only used as an auxiliary learning method, and its proportion in English learning should not be over-highlighted.

2.3 Uneven Teaching Quality

The incapable English teaching level of some teachers is one of the important problems that existed in English teaching at colleges and universities. When recruiting and selecting teachers, it is necessary to strictly examine the professional skills and educational concepts of candidate by professional examinations, and improve the teaching and academic level through relevant training, guidance, research cooperation and other forms. Some teachers have excellent English pronunciation and speaking skills, but they lack in-depth teaching experience on grammar knowledge, translation and writing skills. It will be difficult on offering guidance and assistance at English professional literacy.

2.4 Singularity in Teaching Methods

It is common for college English teachers taking courseware and PowerPoint dictation in enriching their teaching contents, but this single-oriented method cannot meet the learning needs of different students and the changing social background. Firstly, many students lack the adaptability of this mode. It is difficult to understand the connection and logic from the English knowledge points according to the teaching contents represented in the PowerPoint; Secondly, the content dictated by the teacher may be uninspired, and it is unable to arouse students' interest and make them active when they studying in the English classes.

2.5 Insufficient Student Autonomy

Nowadays, students can use various educational resources for independent learning online. However, many students lack the self-control and initiative to make these resources on expanding their English learning environment. Due to the supervision of schools or parents, students may rely on their guidance and requirements, and have no willingness to think and act independently. Moreover, many students do not have sufficient knowledge on evaluating different teaching resources and methods, and are easily misled by low-quality learning materials.

3. Theory and Application of University English Teaching

3.1 Effective Inputs and Outputs

The theory holds the opinion that input and output are the basis for learning a language. Therefore, when teaching a language, focusing on oral presentation can helpfully promote the language skills, especially for those who are limited with English knowledge. Teachers need to stimulate students' interest with a variety of teaching creations, so that their English output level will continuously be developed.

For teachers, they should focus on teaching quality and its scientific nature. Memorizing the knowledge of the textbook, making the teaching contents conveyed, valuing the teaching interactions with students, and taking modern teaching methods and resources such as PowerPoint and multimedia rather than monotonous mode such as blackboard-writing. It will effectively break down the complex content into smaller unit that students can understand language points easily.

It is also necessary to improve students' participation and thinking, and carry forward interventions such as English Team Study and Learning (TSL). The cultivation of learning interest is not only

including the English learning materials, but also the stylish thinking ability. Students should actively participate in various oral and written exercises, and conduct group chat. So that, students can timely output the correct-used English speaking and grammar, and practice it naturally with fluency. For those more complex problems and mistakes that are difficult to correct, teachers should communicate with students positively, carefully analyze and propose the specific skills and strategies for helping students master language knowledge and expression ability in a better understanding^[4].

3.2 Authentic Communicative Environment

Linguistic research shows that real communication scenarios will be the most important part of effective language teaching. Communicating and speaking in some more authentic contexts, which can greatly enhance students' English communication willingness and presentation skills.

Textbooks, audio, video and physical objects for can help students on mastering common questions, answer patterns, slang, commonplace sayings or other characteristic pronunciation in language studying. Students can join in the role-play or other individual activities for different situations, the competitions or receiving interactive support from organizations. For example, in a simulation experience of tourism shopping, everyone can express their own topic connotation and learn how to follow the corresponding recommended. Passing the English word and sentence to replace the Chinese characters. Letting students to make a friend invitation or an expression on describing products, and transfer these practices in a spoken or written style. During the performance and class group evaluation, finding out language weaknesses, timely conducting correctness quiz or directional feedback, and enhancing their expression skills.

The benefits are obvious. Firstly, it enables students to acquire languages skills efficiently, which lays a solid foundation for subsequent learning; Secondly, by participating in activities students can also improve their communication and emotional understanding; Finally, this teaching method stimulates a spirit of exploration and innovation, which fosters critical, innovative and collaborative thinking. English accents and various cultural backgrounds are challenges during this process. Teachers need to adjust the content and style of activities, create effective communications that can acquire students' acceptance, take the group work or quick feedback strategies for better improvement.

3.3 Promotion on Emotional Experience and Response

Emotional experience and response are key elements affecting students' English learning ability. Teachers need to constantly innovate education methods, build communication and emotional connection points for students by establishing a corresponding environment. Actively guiding students to participate in various and interactive learning activities.

Students can be interested by novels, audio and video, cultural anecdotes, etc., so that they can enter in deep studying. For example, the writing of annual plans in English is one of the main tasks, inviting the members from other grades of the same major to share their review or dissemination in English on articles, posters or other common topics such as food, music, tourism, etc. These English free talks combined with regional characteristics, folk culture and other wonderful elements to enrich their integrated English learning materials. In addition, allowing students to actively choose their interested activity topics and perform, and practicing these generously in oral expression and listening practice can also improve students' consciousness and confidence in foreign language learning, and they will gain achievements and enjoy in the participation for advancing their English expression level.

Teachers should create a real and emotional learning scenarios. This scenario can be a fun and moving article or a group APP. Students' learning achievements should be approved positively in this process. After all, it is necessary to establish their emotional experience, so that English learning will become more meaningful and valuable for them. It is also important to create a personalized and welcoming teaching atmosphere. Conveying cordial effects is beneficial on daily learning status and the non-channel feedback. Building a stable and effective retrospective mechanism and providing a full range of educational services. Teachers can also organize different forms of interactive activities such as English corner and foreign teacher classes at a proper time, it can deepen students' knowledge and feelings of foreign language and international culture.

3.4 Variety of Teaching Strategies

Factors such as age, experience, and cultural background will affect on students' learning status and

acquisition results in English. For young students, teacher should adopt a fun and educational approach, introducing interesting elements, and designing interactive content; For adults, highlighting the practicality in their language acquisition, the content should be fitted in their life and work needs, specific problems, and appropriately integrate social accents, idioms and other specific content to reflect the actual life situation, so that they can give the best feedback. For cultural differences, teachers should learn about individual's learning status, focus on precautions and corresponding psychological services, and provide comprehensive support.

Selecting the objective teaching methods and assessments, including demonstration teaching, interactive teaching, task-based teaching, etc. In teachings, if teachers have no interaction in sharing related topics and scenarios, it will make the memorization of texts boring and impractical. Meanwhile, it will have adverse effects on students' learning interest and participation. The appropriate introduction of imitation, comparison, visiting and other skills can enhance students' self-adjustment ability, social experiences and cross-level value points, and also have a positive effect on highlighting new skills and feedback.

4. Conclusion

The theory of second language acquisition plays an important guiding role in understanding and improving the efficiency of English learning. But for truly realizing the improvement of students' English learning, which requires the self-reflection, continuous learning exploration and serious practice from teachers.

Only by constantly adjusting and improving teaching methods can meet the needs of students and promote students' English level. For example, role-playing and other activities can be used in teaching for enhancing students' interaction with the external environment, so that students can learn in a convincing and relaxed state. However, depending on factors such as learning style and the mastery of language learning materials and standardized process, customized teaching measures are necessary.

This theory has great reference value in English teaching. However, it is eager for the most of English teachers teaching in college and universities carrying on the professional English studying, repeatedly realizing their English teaching practice derived from the theoretical guidance they devoted to^[5].

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