Output-oriented Approach and College English Teaching Reform

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Abstract. Based on the in-depth analysis of the disadvantages and benefits of traditional college English teaching methods, the key problems to be solved in the course of curriculum reform are identified. Output-oriented approach is conducive to overcoming the disadvantage of "separation of learning and application" in College English teaching in China. Its unique advantages can drive learning output. Its abundant evaluation system can also enhance students’ learning motivation, and in the process of improving the traditional teaching mode to form a cooperative-facilitative teaching mode.

1. Problems in Traditional College English Teaching Method

1.1 Traditional College English teaching methods lack abundant ways to test learning outcomes.

The ways of testing learning outcomes in the process of College English teaching include the midterm and final examinations under the traditional mode, as well as the National College English grade examinations. It is a fixed way in the traditional teaching mode to use these examinations to test students. However, it is far from enough to change this way only by means of the reform of College English teaching methods. This rigid goal and learning method will make students lose some flexibility and language sensitivity in language and culture learning. Without these characteristics which are crucial to language learning, a "cramming" learning mode will be formed in the process of learning, and thus they will not be able to go to school. Good results have been achieved in the internal examination and the national unified College English Level Examination.

1.2 Lack of students-oriented language thinking ability training.

In the traditional college English classroom teaching, there has always been a lack of students-oriented language thinking ability training, resulting in a great deal of autonomous learning space for students cannot get good teaching results, and students in this process cannot establish a very clear and serious learning objectives.

1.3 Lack of diversified cultural research and analysis methods.

The drawbacks of traditional college English teaching mainly come from the strengthening of instrumental features in English teaching, while neglecting the purpose and foothold of learning this language tool. The goal of English language learning is to have a deeper understanding of cultural exchanges and multiculturalism, and to have a more open and inclusive view of the politics, economy, culture and specific lifestyles of the English-speaking countries in the world.

2. Output-oriented Approach (POA) Theory

POA consists of three parts: teaching philosophy, teaching hypothesis and teaching process. "Teaching concept" determines the direction and overall goal of classroom teaching; "teaching hypothesis" is the theoretical basis of each link of classroom teaching, which needs to be tested one by one; the third part, "teaching process" is the carrier of realizing "teaching concept" and testing "teaching hypothesis", and is also the step and means of realizing POA teaching goal.
2.1 It is a new hypothesis to add the hypothesis of "promoting learning by evaluating".

Breaking the boundaries between "learning" and "evaluation", we regard evaluation as the strengthening and deepening stage of learning. The realization means of this hypothesis is "Teacher-Student Cooperative Evaluation", which can balance and make up for the shortcomings of the existing single evaluation method, at the same time, it can solve the difficulties of POA output task and teacher evaluation burden. The evaluation of teacher-student cooperation can be divided into three stages: pre-class, in-class and after-class. Before class, the teacher chooses and reviews typical samples according to the unit teaching objectives. In class, students first think independently, then communicate with each other in groups, then discuss in large classes under the guidance of teachers. Teachers give timely comments prepared before class. After class, on the basis of teachers' professional guidance in class, students supplement "teacher-student cooperative evaluation" with self-assessment or peer-to-peer evaluation.

2.2 The traditional rationale for the "output-driven hypothesis"

More than 2,000 years ago, Xue Ji pointed out that "if you don't know enough, you can turn your back on yourself; if you know difficulties, you can strengthen yourself." This sentence means that if you know that you don't have enough knowledge, you can urge yourself to study hard; if you don't know much, you can spur yourself to study hard. The output-driven hypothesis is to provide students with the opportunity of "insufficient knowledge" and "difficult knowledge". "Input Promotion Hypothesis" emphasizes "learning for use", which is to promote students' self-reflexivity and self-improvement. Specifically, in order for students to make up for their own shortcomings, teachers need to provide relevant learning materials to help students complete output tasks.

3. The Role of Output-oriented Approach in College English Teaching Reform

With the widening of the degree of opening to the outside world, the demand of the society for the foreign language ability of college graduates is constantly increasing, which is accompanied by constant criticism of the quality of foreign language teaching in Colleges and universities. For example, "Dumb English", "High Input and Low Output", "Time-consuming and Low Efficiency" and so on. The author does not fully agree with these accusations, but it must be admitted that there is a clear room for improvement in foreign language teaching in China. To solve China's local problems, it is necessary to analyze China's national conditions and find suitable methods. It is on the premise of carefully analyzing the current situation of foreign language teaching in China that POA puts forward teaching methods with Chinese characteristics. Its fundamental purpose is to overcome the drawbacks of "putting more emphasis on learning than on using" and "putting more emphasis on learning than on learning" in native foreign language teaching. The former is "text-centered" while the latter is "task or project-centered". Whether the former or the latter, their common characteristics are "separation of learning and application".

POA is a traditional Chinese medicine prescription for the criticism of "separation of learning and application". The purpose of POA is to enable students to "promote learning", "use learning with help", "apply learning with application" and "achieve success in learning". What's the difference between the input hypothesis and the existing western teaching theories? Input hypothesis considers input as the determinant of language acquisition. Swain's output hypothesis highlights the multiple roles output plays in language acquisition. These hypotheses all highlight a certain aspect or link of foreign language learning, and it is difficult for teachers to integrate them and "fall to the ground" in the course of teaching. This hypothesis is equivalent to different "western medicine", which can cure symptoms but not root causes. The POA comprehensive policy covers all aspects of teaching (driving facilitating evaluation). It is interlinked, step by step, so that teachers can put teaching into practice.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, the traditional college English teaching shows many disadvantages, including the imperfection of the driving system, the content learning system and the evaluation system. The
output-oriented principle can properly solve these disadvantages by utilizing its unique advantages, enhance the students’ learning motivation by using the methods of driving the learning output and abundant evaluation system, and improve the traditional teaching in the process. The mode of learning is to form a cooperative and facilitative teaching mode.

References


