

Study of College English Reading Teaching from the Perspective of Schema Theory

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Abstract. Reading teaching is an important part of English teaching. Traditional College English teaching has always been based on teaching students' words, grammar, sentence patterns as the main content, and the teaching effect is not ideal, so we must actively carry out the reform and innovation of teaching mode. In this paper, three schema forms of schema theory are introduced into college English reading teaching activities. It is hoped that schema theory can help vocational college students overcome difficulties in learning, improve the quality and speed of reading, stimulate their interest in learning, change the way from passive learning to active learning, and find a way to cultivate themselves. A new way to cultivate college students' English application ability and high quality is proposed.

Keywords: College English; Reading Teaching; Schema Theory.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension plays an important role in English learning and is the main way of language input. However, it is generally unsatisfactory for students to understand and correctly answer this traditional type of questions, even for students with rich vocabulary reserves and solid basic skills. The reason is that students pay more attention to improving vocabulary and training grammar skills, but ignore the background and cultural connotation of the text and can not accurately understand the author's real intention. Therefore, from the perspective of cognitive linguistics schema theory, this paper explores reading strategies to improve students' understanding of the background, with a view to providing new guidance for college English reading teaching.

2. Schema Theory

Schema theory was first proposed by Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, and then applied by Frederick Bartlett, a British cognitive psychologist, to psychological research. The schema theory has made great progress. Schema refers to a priori encoding block that has been internalized into the human brain about external knowledge and experience and forms an orderly knowledge, experience system and framework around different categories [2]. Every individual's perception and understanding of new information depends on the transcendental schema in the brain. Only by connecting the new information with the transcendental schema in the brain can people decode and understand the new information through the transcendental schema.

Many educators have applied schema theory to the study of reading teaching, which has greatly promoted the development of reading teaching. Gough's "bottom-up" reading model and Goodman's "top-down" reading model provide a model for the application of schema theory to reading teaching research. "Bottom-up" reading refers to the reader's step-by-step recognition of morphemes, words, phrases or larger linguistic units to construct the understanding of the text. It emphasizes the linear input of text information from low-level units to high-level units. "Top-down" reading refers to the process in which the reader actively uses the existing brain schema to compare, verify, infer and predict information so as to achieve the understanding of new information. This method pays more attention to the overall grasp of information and the macro-understanding and Enlightenment of graphics on reading.

3. Factors Influencing Students' English Reading Teaching

There are many factors affecting students' reading comprehension in English reading teaching. According to schema theory, there are two conditions for students to correctly understand an article when reading: one is to have a schema corresponding to the article, the other is to be able to activate the schema successfully in the process of reading. Generally speaking, there are three types of schema affecting reading comprehension: linguistic schema, content schema and formal schema.

3.1 Language Schema

Language schema refers to the linguistic encoding and decoding features of recognizing words and combining them into sentences by using grammatical rules, that is, the combination schema formed by the basic constituent features of language in the human brain. The application of language schema in English reading teaching involves vocabulary recognition and grammar rules. It is found that one of the key factors affecting students' English reading is their insufficient vocabulary. As we all know, vocabulary is one of the three major elements of language formation. British linguist D. A. Wilkins once said, "Without grammar, people can not express many things, but without vocabulary, people can not express anything", which is enough to illustrate the importance of vocabulary. The insufficiency of students' vocabulary seriously affects their reading. It is also found that another key factor affecting students' English reading is their lack of adequate understanding of English syntactic structure. English and Chinese belong to different language families, and their language structures are quite different. The study shows that the greater the difference in language structure, the higher the incidence of reading comprehension errors; the less students know about the language structure of the text, the greater the probability of understanding errors and the greater the possibility of their biased understanding of the text.

Therefore, the shortage of English vocabulary and the lack of English syntactic knowledge, which affect students' English reading, lead to the lack of language schema.

3.2 Content Schema

Content schema refers to the schema template formed in the brain by students' background knowledge and past experience, which includes both general background knowledge and professional background knowledge of a certain profession. In fact, students' reading process is a process of understanding and interpreting the text, which requires the participation of background knowledge in the schema. Students can understand new materials only by starting the original schema to compare, reason, analyze and synthesize new reading materials. According to schema theory, how well a reader understands an article depends on how well he starts the content schema of the article. If the reader understands an article, it shows that he has the schematic content of the article and has successfully started it, and the schema provides a consistent interpretation of the article. If the reader fails to understand the text, it means that he does not have relevant schemata in his brain, or that although he does have relevant schemata, he fails to start it successfully, resulting in the failure of new content materials to communicate with background knowledge, resulting in difficulties or failures in understanding.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that one of the factors affecting students' English reading comprehension is whether they can successfully start schematic content. Schema content plays an important role in students' reading comprehension. Only when students are familiar with the background knowledge of reading materials, can they better understand the new reading materials. When students lack the schema of the target language knowledge or can not start the schema, it will inevitably lead to difficulties in reading comprehension.

3.3 Formal Schema

Formal schema refers to the image of the genre and rhetoric structure of written text in the brain of students, including the knowledge of different styles and their use. For example, narratives are written in chronological order, including background, events, development and ending, while

expository texts usually contain five rhetorical structures: enumeration, causation, problem solving, comparison and description. In the teaching of reading, we find that students tend to concentrate too much on some specific issues, lack of grasp of the genre, textual structure and rhetoric structure of the article, and they have low reading efficiency. This is the manifestation of students' lack of corresponding formal schema or insufficient understanding of formal schema. The research shows that "the more familiar readers are with the genre and structure of the reading material, the more they can grasp the intention and level of the author's writing, and the clearer the logical relationship in the article", and the faster and more accurate the starting form schema is. It can be concluded that another factor affecting students' English reading is the lack of corresponding formal schema in their minds or their inadequate understanding of formal schema.

4. Applying Graphic Theory to Improve English Reading Teaching

4.1 Expanding Language Schema

In order to expand students' schema knowledge, we need to expand students' language schema first. Without the knowledge of linguistic schemata, there will be no way to understand the words and sentences in the article. Language schema refers to the basic knowledge of language, including grammar, vocabulary, sentence patterns, etc. It is not only the cornerstone of reading comprehension and analysis, but also the foundation of students' reading ability. Any effective reading skills are based on solid basic skills. The more words the students know, the more confident they will be when they read the article.

When teaching students' vocabulary, teachers should not memorize words by rote, but should help students memorize vocabulary more easily and firmly. For example, it can help students to draw "word classification map" and arrange the words they have memorized according to certain rules, so that students can quickly grasp the meaning of the words while reading. It can also use the form of "word conjunction" by multimedia means to help students memorize words visually and audibly, and teachers can also teach students to use rhetoric maps to improve their reading level. Having mastered some words, students can not fully understand the meaning of an article. Reading long and difficult sentences often makes it difficult for students to understand. Therefore, we should also strengthen the cultivation of students' ability to understand sentence patterns. In fact, when they do English reading comprehension, students with high level of reading often only need to grasp the key sentences to understand the main idea of the sentences. In order to improve students' ability to understand sentence patterns, teachers can make efforts from five basic sentence patterns, pay attention to the learning of parallel conjunctions, but, or, and, so, for, etc., learn simple sentences and subject-subordinate compound sentences carefully, promote the understanding of sentences, and strengthen the understanding of reading.

When teaching each article, teachers should also supplement the grammar patterns of key sentences, and supplement relevant grammar exercises in the form of an article and a topic, so as to make up for students' knowledge of various grammatical dimensions and consolidate the language schema.

4.2 Enriching Content Schema

Content schema generally refers to the historical culture and background knowledge reflected in the article. For students, English is the second language, and only in the classroom learning is carried out in the English environment. We can say that both linguistic knowledge and cultural background knowledge in English are inferior to those in Chinese. Therefore, students' understanding of English materials is not as good as that of Chinese materials. The culture of mother tongue is very different from that of English. Students need to solve a lot of difficulties in reading comprehension caused by cultural differences between East and West. Therefore, under the guidance of the theme of reading materials, teachers need to lead students to consciously solve the obstacles of cross-cultural communication, pay attention to the accumulation of cross-cultural common sense and compare Chinese and Western cultures, so that students can establish clear cultural diagrams in order to better

understand the connotation of the text. For example, when students read corpus involving the content of formal Chinese and Western banquets, teachers can guide students to compare tableware, guest seats and dishes. Different types of products and ways of drinking make students not only master banquet etiquette, but also deeply understand the content of corpus. Therefore, these English learners living in the Chinese environment have little knowledge of the English cultural background. Although they have mastered the literal meaning of the words in the text, they can not understand the deep conception and the overall structure of the article. Therefore, we should enrich the content schema and master the cultural background and customs of different countries. In addition, teachers should also infiltrate common-sense background knowledge into the classroom, including general knowledge of human social life and general knowledge of various disciplines, such as history, geography, politics, biology and so on. In reading teaching, teachers need to recommend some English and American daily life books and popular science books to students to help them broaden their horizons and understand the social life and popular science in the United States and Britain so as to establish relevant content schema in their minds.

4.3 Rational use of Formal Schema

Formal schema is the knowledge about the genre and structure of the article. Formal schema should be used reasonably in reading. Articles can be divided into narrative, expository and argumentative. Narrative is the time, place, character, process and result of an article. Descriptions generally introduce the appearance, function, characteristics and uses of things. The argumentation will express the author's arguments, arguments and opinions. If students understand this point, they can quickly grasp the context and focus of the whole reading article. Reasonable use of formal schema can effectively improve students' English reading ability. The text structure of the article, the author's overall design and overall expression of the style of the article, is mainly embodied in the topic sentence or paragraph topic sentence. Readers need to understand the relevant content as a whole in order to grasp the overall picture of the article. Specifically, in teaching activities, teachers can lead students to complete a large number of guessing and screening exercises on topic sentences. For example, teachers can move the central sentences of each paragraph to the end of the text, requiring students to complete the content blanks in the form of context collocation; they can also guide students to summarize the central sentences appropriately according to the main idea of the paragraph, which not only trains students' logical thinking ability, but also tests students' ability to understand and analyze articles.

5. Summary

In a word, the old schema will be used to build new schema, and the students' formal schema, content schema and language schema will be further consolidated. This paper attempts to introduce schema theory into college English reading teaching, explore a new mode of English reading teaching, and guide students to use three schemas to help them improve their reading comprehension. Schema theory can help students to strengthen the accumulation of language schema, content schema and formal schema, further use schema knowledge, master reading strategies and skills, fully stimulate students' interest in English reading learning, improve students' initiative and enthusiasm in reading learning, thus effectively improve students' English reading level.

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