

Exploration on English Teaching Reform in Local Higher Education Institutions Based on the “X-Argument”*

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Abstract—Currently, there are some problems in English teaching in local higher education institutions, such as relatively weak teaching staff, unreasonable curriculum design, insufficient teaching methods, outdated teaching concepts, and weak independent learning ability of students, etc. The fundamental solution to these problems lies in improving the quality and efficiency of English teaching through the research and reform of English teaching. The “X-argument” proposed by Prof. Wang Chuming provides useful ideas for the reform of English teaching in local higher education institutions. On the basis of presenting the background of English teaching reform in local higher education institutions and on the basis of “X-argument”, this paper will explain the theoretical basis of English teaching reform and make beneficial exploration into the practice of it in local higher education institutions.

Keywords—English teaching; local higher education institutions; the “X-argument”; theoretical basis; reform strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

The “X-argument” is a language acquisition theory proposed by Wang Chuming, professor of Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics Research Center of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. It consists of two basic concepts, that is, language is learned by “CEC (completion, extension and creation)” and the efficiency of language learning is improved by “CEC (completion, extension and creation)”. In the “X-argument”, “CEC (completion, extension and creation)” is undoubtedly the key to foreign language learning. In a word, in various forms of language communication, after receiving the expressions of others, one can express one's own thoughts through the combination of imitation and creation. For the vast majority of students, English learning is a process from nothing to something, in which process, imitation is inevitable. At the same time, English learning is an outside-in process, and students can satisfy the communicative needs only when they construct autonomously. Therefore, a good job done on “CEC” can not only improve the quality of English teaching

in local higher education institutions and promote teaching reform, but also enhance the efficiency of students' “learning” and “using”, so as to cultivate more high-quality compound talents needed by the social development of the country. Based on presentation of the background of English teaching reform in local higher education institutions and on the basis of “X-argument”, this paper will explain the theoretical basis of English teaching reform and make beneficial exploration into the practice of it in local higher education institutions.

II. BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH TEACHING REFORM IN LOCAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Local higher education institutions refer to the local institutions of higher learning at the undergraduate level. In recent years, in the process of implementing the strategy of “Strengthening China with Talents” and promoting the reform of higher education, in local higher education institutions have attracted more and more attention, making more and more important contributions to cultivating talents, improving the quality of the people and serving local economic development. However, it is undeniable that local higher education institutions still have some limitations in teaching resources, faculty and students, which affect the improvement of their teaching quality. These limitations are reflected in the teaching of various majors in local higher education institutions, including the very important English teaching. With long cycle and wide coverage, College English course is an important course for higher education to train high quality and compound talents. Especially with the development of globalization and the continuous progress of China's opening up to the outside world, training high-quality English talents or other professional talents with English language application ability has undoubtedly become one of the important goals of higher education. In terms of the current situation of English teaching in local higher education institutions, “dumb English”, “Chinglish”, “deaf English” and other phenomena still exist to varying degrees, which to a large extent hinder the cultivation of English talents and “English + professional” compound talents.

The analysis of the problems existing in English teaching in local higher education institutions should be started from

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two aspects, "teaching" and "learning". From the perspective of "teaching", due to the limitations of teaching resources and other aspects, local higher education institutions have some problems in English teaching, such as relatively weak faculty, unreasonable curriculum design, insufficient teaching methods and methods, and waiting for updating teaching concepts. From the Angle of "learning", students in local higher education institutions have certain learning initiative, and there are also a significant number of students to adhering to a positive attitude to learning English, but due to insufficient learning ability, unscientific learning methods and lack of effective learning strategies, the efficient input and high-quality output of English knowledge and skills cannot be realized. The key to solve these problems is to improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching through the research and reform of English teaching. And the "X-argument" provides a useful idea for the English teaching reform in local higher education institutions.

III. THEORETICAL BASIS OF ENGLISH TEACHING REFORM IN LOCAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BASED ON THE "X-ARGUMENT"

As mentioned above, there are many problems in English teaching in local higher education institutions, which affect the improvement of the quality and efficiency of English teaching. For English as an applied subject, it is undoubtedly the foothold to improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching to let students learn and use English. To introduce the teaching concept and teaching method of "X-argument" into the English teaching reform of local undergraduate colleges, it is necessary to first understand what "CEC" is, what its advantages are and how to realize "CEC" in English teaching, so as to lay a foundation for the scientific and reasonable application of "CEC" in English teaching practice.

Professor Wang Chuming's "X-argument" has experienced the development from "write-to-learn" to "learn-by-CEC" approach. In the stage of "write-to-learn", "The Length Approach" is regarded as an important method to help foreign language teaching out of difficulties. [1] "The Length Approach" mentioned is to guide students to often write and write long compositions in and out of class, so as to enhance students' language output ability and application ability through "frequent writing" and "write long texts", thus enhancing their initiative and sense of achievement in English learning. With the deepening of related research and practice of "The Length Approach", this "write-to-learn" approach has given full play to its own advantages, but also presents some shortcomings. Although the "The Length Approach" focusing on output has exercised students' ability of "writing" and "using", it is difficult for students to break through their own ability limitation due to the lack of input. Under this background, "reading-writing integrated continuation task" came into being. "The reading-writing integrated continuation task" is to emphasize "writing" while requiring English teaching to arrange "reading" before "writing", which is more consistent with the law of language learning. That is to say, to realize input and imitation through reading first and to re-write in the context constructed before. On the one hand, the words and sentences learned in reading

can be applied in the later writing, which can promote the use after learning and improve the quality and efficiency of English learning. On the other hand, the cycle of "reading-writing integrated continuation task" can promote students' creative output based on imitation in an interactive environment of communication and improve their language use ability. With the development of "reading-writing integrated continuation task", "CEC" has become increasingly important in foreign language teaching, and "listening-speaking integrated continuation task", "reading-speaking integrated continuation task", "image-text-writing integrated continuation task" and "reading-translating integrated continuation task" have become important approaches to promoting the reform of foreign language teaching, including English teaching, and improving the quality and efficiency of teaching.

At present, the research on "X-argument" is on the rise year by year. The research content involves the linguistic basis of "X-argument", its advantages in teaching practice, development prospect and application potential, etc. In general, there are abundant studies on the theoretical level of "X-argument", while not yet so many on the practical level. [2] The aim of "X-argument" is to solve the problems such as the difficulty in English learning, the low quality and efficiency of English teaching and the unimproved English pragmatic ability of college students. In other words, it is of great practical significance to introduce "X-argument" into English teaching practice. At the same time, promoting the study of "X-argument" in practice will further promote the improvement and development of its own theoretical system and application strategy.

IV. PRACTICE AND EXPLORATION OF ENGLISH TEACHING REFORM IN LOCAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BASED ON THE "X-ARGUMENT"

To introduce the "X-argument" into English teaching in local higher education institutions, we should not only fully understand the connotation and function of "X-argument", but also make full use of the method of it, in order to make it play a positive role in English teaching reform. The "reading-writing integrated continuation task" mentioned above occupies an important position in the theoretical development and practical application of the "X-argument". The "reading-writing integrated continuation task" can be realized in a variety of ways in practical application. Not only can students read English texts, newspapers and other materials and re-write in this context, but also can they re-continue the English version of classics of classic Chinese literature familiar to them, so as to form a circular teaching process of "reading and writing" and improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching in the communication between input and output. In addition to reading-writing integrated continuation task, CEC is also embodied in English teaching as the approaches like "listening-speaking integrated continuation task", "reading-speaking integrated continuation task", "image-text-writing integrated continuation task", "comparison-writing integrated continuation task", "listening-speaking-writing integrated continuation task" and "reading-translating integrated continuation task", etc. [3]

For example, "listening-speaking integrated continuation task" is also an important way to improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching. The most typical "listening-speaking integrated continuation task" is dialogue, which brings high intensity of communication and interaction, and enables students to integrate contextual information into the dialogue in a more natural and conscious way in a rich context. The language acquired in this way is more conducive to the combination of learning and application, enabling students to get used to and learn English expression and thinking mode, which can improve the efficiency of pragmatic competence training. For another example, "reading-speaking integrated continuation task" is a way of teaching conversation after reading, which can ensure the communication be conducted at a high level of input. At the same time, in the specific teaching practice, it is also possible to carry out "comparison-writing integrated continuation task". Teachers can identify a theme in Chinese and western languages, Chinese and western literature, and Chinese and western culture for comparison. Teachers can identify a theme in Chinese and western languages, Chinese and western literature, and Chinese and western culture for comparison, and ask students to tell Chinese stories with the same theme in English after reading English stories, so as to enhance the interest of teaching and stimulate students' interest in learning.

Every application approach of "X-argument" in English teaching practice has its own advantages. In order to integrate it into the English teaching reform of local higher education institutions, it is necessary to update teaching philosophy, optimize curriculum design, enrich teaching methods, strengthen teaching staff and carry out diversified teaching activities. First, in traditional college English teaching, oral English and reading are regarded as "pioneers of reform", while the emphasis on writing is far from enough, and the understanding of "reading-writing integrated continuation task" and other extended teaching approaches of "X-argument" is not yet in place. Therefore, guiding teachers and students, especially teachers who play a leading role in teaching, to fully realize the importance of "CEC" to college English teaching is undoubtedly a key link. Second, it is necessary to increase the proportion of listening course and writing course in the course setting, use "reading-writing integrated continuation task", "listening-writing integrated continuation task", "listening-speaking integrated continuation task" and other approaches in the classroom teaching to improve the quality of classroom teaching, and open "reading-writing integrated continuation task" and other specialized courses. Third, it is necessary to make full use of modern information technology in the limited classroom teaching time, so that teachers and students can switch between "listening", "speaking", "reading" and "writing" efficiently. For example, the teacher can assign an English movie before class, or play an excerpt of the movie in class, so that students can make creative output after audio-visual input and try to complete the story. [4] Fourth, it is necessary to constantly strengthen the construction of teachers. Only on the basis of full cognition of "X-argument" can teachers realize scientific and reasonable application in English teaching practice. In this regard, efforts should be made not

only promote the renewal of teachers' teaching ideas, but also pay attention to the cultivation of teachers' teaching skills and appropriately increase the number of professional teachers. The "reading-writing integrated continuation task", requires teachers to put a lot of energy to review the students' compositions, and at the same time, put forward targeted learning suggestions for students according to their different situations, and assign the teaching content in next stage of "reading-writing integrated continuation task". Fifth, the fundamental purpose of "CEC" is to improve the quality of English teaching and improve students' comprehensive language use ability and even cross-cultural communication ability. As the saying goes, practice is the only criterion for testing truth. Before students go out of school and enter the society, local higher education institutions should fully tap local teaching resources, unite with government agencies, enterprises and communities, to hold themed activities or provide internship opportunities for students to test the effectiveness of "learn-by-CEC" in practice. In this way, while practicing students' language application skills, their weaknesses can be positioned and the English teaching practice can be improved, so as to improve "learn-by-CEC" in the practice of English teaching according to local conditions.

V. CONCLUSION

How to learn a foreign language efficiently is an issue that troubles many researchers. How to improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching is also a problem that Chinese researchers always pay attention to. Under the background of college teaching reform, as an important course to cultivate high-quality compound talents, the reform of English teaching is also a priority of the teaching reform of local higher education institutions. The proposal and promotion of "X-argument" provide a new direction for English teaching reform in local higher education institutions. From "Write-to-learn" to "Learn-by-CEC", the theoretical system and application methods of "X-argument" are constantly improved and enriched. With the deepening of its application in the field of foreign language teaching, "X-argument" will play a greater role in the reform of English teaching in local universities and even in the process of improving the quality and efficiency of foreign language teaching in China.

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