

Difficulties in the Application of TESOL Teaching Model in China

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explore how Chinese TESOL students who trained in the United Kingdom and the United States adapt to Chinese classrooms under the background of the rise of language teaching and the expanding demand for English teachers in China. This paper argues that under the trend of globalization, the increasing exchanges between countries have promoted the rise of language teaching. English is widely used in the world, and the development of English teaching is undoubtedly of great significance to the development of globalization. This paper first analyzes TESOL postgraduate courses offered in The UK and the US, and concludes that TESOL attaches importance to the training of teachers' teaching practice ability.

On this basis, it simply describes the English teaching model advocated by TESOL. The main part of this paper discusses in detail the problems faced by TESOL teaching model in classroom teaching in China. The study found that the teaching mode advocated by TESOL was formulated according to the characteristics of western classrooms, which was inconsistent with China's national conditions and difficult to be applied in China. This is due to objective limitations, such as the phenomenon of large class teaching in China, the teacher-centered teaching model and the exam-oriented evaluation mechanism. It is suggested that Chinese students should fully understand the national conditions of China's teaching practice before studying abroad, and compare and reflect the knowledge taught in the course with China's national conditions during the learning process.

Keywords: *TESOL, globalization, English teaching in China, classroom in China, teaching principles of TESOL*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era, all countries are in the tide of globalization. Many countries have realized that the participation in the process of globalization is an important way to seek development in today's world where politics, economy and culture are closely linked. Under such an era background, in order to promote foreign exchanges, each country attaches increasing importance to language teaching. Among all the languages, English is the most popular and influential one. As a widely used language in the world, its role is obvious.

China was a late participant in the wave of foreign exchanges. However, since the reform and opening up, China has taken the initiative to integrate itself into globalization. No matter in the economic field, or in other fields such as politics, culture and society, China has been closely connected with the outside world. All of these require language support. English teaching in China can cover all learning periods, and various English training courses are gradually emerging, so the demand for English teachers is also increasing.

Teacher education often occupies a central position in the national education policy, so that teacher education has guiding significance for teaching quality and students' learning development, which was illustrated respectively by Shohel and Banks [1] and by Karim, Mohamed and Rahman [2]. In China, the sources of English teachers are not limited to college English majors or normal college students. With the deepening of foreign exchanges, the overseas students are also gradually expanding, among which TESOL major is one of the popular majors. A significant proportion of TESOL students return to work in English teaching. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore how English teachers trained under TESOL teaching mode can apply their own knowledge in classroom teaching under China's national conditions. This paper refers to several relevant literature and extracts relevant information from them, simply enumerates the 15 schools offering TESOL professional master's degree courses in the UK and the US, and extracts that English teaching theory and practice account for the largest proportion. On this basis, the emphasis on the cultivation of teaching

practice ability in TESOL graduate training is extracted, and on this basis, the six principles of English teaching method advocated by TESOL are briefly introduced. At the same time, it briefly introduces China's special national conditions. Combined with China's national conditions, the paper briefly analyzes the difficulty of TESOL's teaching principles in China, and give some suggestions in the conclusion.

2. MASTER OF TESOL AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN CHINA

According to statistics which was made by Li Xiaoqi [4] in 2011, 52 universities offer TESOL major and confer master degree in the UK alone, while more than 136 universities offer TESOL major and confer master degree in the US. In recent years, this number is still changing and showing an upward trend.

The curriculum of TESOL master degree offered by ten American universities, including the University of Hawaii at Mano, the University of Pittsburgh, Vanderbilt University, the Faculty College at Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Indiana University at Bloomington, the University of Arizona, and Pennsylvania State University, mainly consists of the following nine parts: English teaching theory and practice, second language teaching theory, English linguistics, second language acquisition theory, general linguistics, pedagogy, research methods, culture, and others. English teaching theory and practice accounted for more than a third of the total curriculum, according to the statistic made by Li Xiaoqi [4] in 2001. TESOL professional Master's degree courses offered by five universities in the UK of the Universities of Birmingham, Edinburgh, York, Lancaster and Leeds include the following five parts: English teaching theory and practice, research methods, English linguistics, second language teaching and others. Among them, the largest proportion is English teaching theory and practice, which can reach 40% of all courses, according to the statistic made by Li Xiaoqi [4] in 2001. It can be seen that both the United Kingdom and the United States put teaching courses in the first place in TESOL professional master's degree courses and pay attention to the cultivation of students' teaching ability. This is very helpful for future graduates to be engaged in front-line teaching, but then there comes a question that must be faced: whether the training of teaching practice methods received by Chinese students abroad will not be acclimated when applied in China? English language teaching is a cross between the ability to describe, classify and understand the world around them, and teaching practice is considered to be constantly changing and highly complex, which was put forward by Larsen-Freeman [3] in 2000. It is

inevitable for TESOL master graduates to return to China and face the new teaching environment. Under the new teaching environment, the changes they have to face include the change of educational object, the change of class capacity and teaching efficiency, the change of classroom environment, the change of cultural background and the change of investigation method. How to adapt to these changes in the environment and put their knowledge to use are the challenge that Chinese students need to face.

2.1. Six principles of English teaching advocated by TESOL

Based on decades of research, TESOL International association has proposed the "Six Principles" of English teaching as the general guiding principles for English teaching and learning. According to TESOL International Association [3], the principles are as follows: First, know your learners; Second, create conditions for language learning; third, design high-quality lessons for language development; Forth, adapt lesson delivery as needed; Fifth, monitor and assess student language development; Finally, engage and collaborate within a community of practice.

It is undeniable that these six principles are indeed the solid foundation of English teaching, more scientific and effective. But considering China's national conditions, many of them are actually difficult to practice.

2.2. Characteristics of Classroom in China

The different social backgrounds between China and the West lead to great differences in Chinese and Western teaching modes. Although there is a growing call for education reform, based on China's special national conditions, China's classroom management model, especially in the basic education section, has three prominent features. The first is a large class size, teacher-led classroom under the condition of high-density curriculum. Secondly, the exam-oriented evaluation mechanism, and the last is regional differences.

Firstly, due to the large number of large population and limited educational resources, classrooms in China are often characterized by large class sizes. Different from smaller classes in the West, the number of students in Chinese classes is more than 30, and even the number of students in high schools can reach more than 50. Another major feature of English classes in China is that most of the teaching is devoted to English exams, mainly because of the shortage of educational resources due to the large population base. The examination is a relatively fair selection method, so students have to face a variety of English tests in their learning career. China has the largest

educational population in the world, and higher education cannot meet the huge demand. Therefore, basic education needs to help students compete for limited educational resources. In "primary school -- ordinary middle school -- ordinary high school -- higher education" this flow channel faces the enormous pressure which cannot be relieved. The main examination method is entrance examination, so the basic education gradually evolved into "exam-oriented education", which was put forward by Liu Shengquan and Liu Chunxia [6] in 1998. Currently, in the basic education section, students need to pass the junior high school entrance examination, high school entrance examination and college entrance examination. After entering the university, students need to pass the Cet-4 and CET-6. Luo pointed [7] out in 2020 that once the main goal of education and teaching work is to improve scores, teachers no longer pay attention to whether knowledge itself is beneficial to students' physical and mental development, nor do they pay attention to what teaching methods can better improve the effectiveness of teaching. Last but not least, there are great differences among different regions in China, which are embodied in the teaching staff and teaching facilities. Taking higher education as an example, according to statistical research made by Feng Yuting [8], the level of provincial higher education in China presents an imbalance in space, among which the higher education resources in the eastern region are higher than those in the western region, and the western region has a low level of economic development and insufficient educational funds.

2.3. Difficulties in implementing the TESOL concept

Among the teaching methods advocated by TESOL, the first principle requires teachers to "learn basic information about their students' families, languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds to engage them in the classrooms and prepare and deliver lessons more effectively", which was published by TESOL [3] in 2018. In this principle, it is emphasized that students' situation should be fully understood by teaching objects, students' interests should be grasped, and targeted teaching contents and methods should be formulated, all of these are conducive to teaching students according to their aptitude and carrying out teaching practice more efficiently. However, this principle requires teachers to pay attention to each student. However, Chinese teachers are often faced with large classes, so it is difficult for them to fully understand each teaching object and then grasp each student's personal situation. Of the six principles, tracking students' progress and language development in principle 5 is also difficult to implement because of the large class size. In China, teachers are often required to adjust their learning

progress according to the learning conditions of most students in large classes. When students are unable to keep up with most of their classmates due to their fast learning progress or the other extreme, they often seek personalized tutoring, such as tutoring classes and private tutoring.

Another difficulty stems mainly from the requirements of standardized tests. Textbooks compiled in China are often structured, knowledge-intensive, and have strict curriculum standards set by the state and local governments, which often require teachers to conduct intensive teaching based on knowledge. At the same time, due to the need of entrance examination, many "cramming teaching" which violates the law of students' cognitive development is very common in China, especially in township schools. All this has brought resistance to the implementation of the six principles advocated by TESOL, such as the requirement of article 2 "make decisions regarding the physical environment, the materials, and the social integration of students to promote language learning".

2.4. Suggestions for Chinese students studying abroad

Based on the above description of the features of TESOL postgraduate curriculum in the UK and the US and the analysis of the conflicts between the six teaching principles advocated by TESOL and China's national conditions, this paper puts forward several suggestions for overseas TESOL postgraduate students in China: First of all, fully understand the current National conditions of China, especially related to the length of schooling, training plan, class size, teaching quality inspection methods, as well as regional differences in teaching, make comparison and reflection when studying abroad, and avoid the separation of knowledge acquired from China's national conditions. Secondly, to draw on the advanced teaching experience of The UK and the US in language teaching. English teachers are not only the main participants in teaching activities, but also the main promoter of teaching reform. To learn from the advanced teaching experience of the West and find the shortcomings of English teaching in China is conducive to promoting the progress of English teaching in China. Finally, understand China's policy dynamics and make career planning in advance. This is because different grades and regions in China have different requirements for English teachers.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the English teaching model advocated by TESOL and compares this teaching model with the actual situation in the field of English teaching in China, and concludes that TESOL's concept cannot be completely copied to China. In

order to help overseas students integrate into English teaching in China more quickly after graduation, combined with TESOL postgraduate courses offered in the UK and the US, this paper puts forward three suggestions for Chinese overseas students: Firstly, it is necessary to have a detailed understanding of the characteristics of English classes in China, and compare the knowledge learned with the actual situation in China during practical learning. Second, students should learn from the advanced achievements of Western English teaching. Finally, students should make personal employment planning in advance. The main shortcoming of this study is that there is no in-depth study on the recommendations in the conclusion, and the implementation effect of these recommendations is still unknown. In the future research, mainly based on the practice of teaching mode advocated by TESOL in China's national conditions, the paper focuses on the practical situation and effect of the suggestions proposed in this paper. The following research will adopt the form of interview to follow up five Chinese students who have gone to the UK and the US for TESOL master courses, and make a return visit after they finish their studies and return to China for employment.

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