

Implications of CDA in News Discourse for College English Reading Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Critical discourse analysis based on news materials is of great practical significance in that news discourse with its publicity, immediacy and objectivity always affects people's attitude towards things and the overall ideology. In a reading class, it is believed that the top-down strategy should be adopted in news comprehension, focusing on the macro understanding of the discourse structure as well as the micro analysis of language points. CDA in English reading teaching will be conducive to a better understanding of the writing intention and social value in a specific context, so as to cultivate students' critical thinking level and improve their intercultural communication ability.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, College English reading teaching, news discourse, systemic-functional grammar

1. INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretical framework and research method for Discourse Analysis developed from Critical linguistics in the late 1970s to early 1980s. It argues that discourse is constructed by power relations and ideology.^[3] Critical reading ability will enable students to see the ideology operating behind the discourse without being blinded and manipulated by it, therefore is considered to be an indispensable part of China's higher English education, especially in news reading teaching. However, the traditional reading lesson focuses on students' literal understanding of the text and readers' appreciation of the text, ignoring the social background and social influence behind the text. Correia believes that although cultivating critical reading is time-consuming and labor-intensive, it can enable readers to take the initiative and have a more equal relationship with the author.^[5]

2. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH NEWS

As a theoretical framework and research method, CDA can be used effectively in English news Discourse. And there are two main methods after practice: systematic functional grammar analysis and interlacing analysis of discourse genre.

2.1. Systematic Functional Grammar Analysis

Halliday trusts that language must perform its functions, so he proposes the concept of metafunctions in his book entitled *An Introduction to Function Grammar*, including the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function.^[1] Because of its great practicability, it has a great influence on the different disciplines, such as discourse analysis, language teaching, stylistics and computer translation. Transitivity is an important part of the conceptual function of the language, used to describe the processes of how people see, hear and act in this world.^[2] Halliday extended the concept of transitivity to clause level. According to Halliday, the transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of PROCESS TYPES. Each process type provides its own mode or schema for construing a particular domain of experience as a figure of a particular kind.

2.2. Analysis of Interlacing of Discourse Genres

The interlacing analysis of discourse emphasizes the rhetorical intention of journalists in the generation of English news discourse, and at the same time, it can also highlight readers' understanding of the implied meaning of the rhetorical device when they understand the

discourse. To analyze English news discourse by Systematic Functional Grammar is to analyze the language used by the writer in the process of reporting. [1,4] The interlacing analysis of discourse genre is an analysis of how the author selectively uses discourse order and discourse genre. Different discourse genres embody different potential meanings and represent the interests and ideologies of different people or groups. The interlacing analysis of discourse genres helps readers to understand the meaning and connotation of the combination of different discourse materials and genres in a particular discourse. News discourse has some specific characteristics, which makes a valuable reading resource. First, it has a cross-textual attribute, including a variety of discourse types. Second, it contains unique stylistic features and important social value, thus reflex the current social ideology. With the increasing importance of media in contemporary society, news discourse has become ubiquitous, providing us with almost continuous news. Third, different countries may have different news systems, but they have a common basic principle of news: objectivity. Objectivity refers to the fact that journalists do not have prejudice, personal judgments in the dissemination of news. However, in practical issues, due to the strong selectivity and perspective of news discourse, complete objectivity is impossible, because the reporting process itself contains many judgments, which are inevitably affected by the authors' value system to a certain extent. The truth is, news discourse, to some extent, has some biases and full of ideology, which are from reporters' conscious or unconscious expressions. But the most of news is still disseminating views consistent with the mainstream beliefs. Therefore, it can participate in the maintenance of social system. When we are reading, news discourse influences and reshapes our views and understandings of the world unconsciously.

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

There are some defects in today's materials used in traditional college English reading teaching. Firstly, most of the textbooks used by teachers are paper textbooks or printed online materials. Although the content is complete, it has lost the timeliness. What students learn may have been months or even years ago. However, in today's world, the language knowledge and grammar rules are changing rapidly, which will lead to students' learning unable to keep up with the development of the times and the updating speed of knowledge. Second, the content is not rich enough. Monotonous content makes people tired. Constantly changing content is a means to protect and ensure students' interests. The content of traditional reading materials is limited to food, transportation and other subjects. Moreover, the text is lengthy, which makes students feel difficult in reading and lose interest in

learning before they start to learn. Therefore, in the selection of reading material, we should try to be close to the life of college students and reflect the intellectual factors and growth needs of college students. To do this to the greatest extent can stimulate students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning to the greatest extent. Thirdly, the situation creation is insufficient. Traditional teaching materials can not provide students with a more real language learning environment, which leads to students' inability to actively participate in learning, imitation and thinking. Without a certain situation, it is hard for them to interact with teachers enthusiastically. Teaching has lost its reality and interactivity.

Comparatively, most of the disadvantages mentioned above can be overcome by using News material. There are mainly four advantages of News discourse. First, it helps to expand students' English vocabulary. Just as Chinese vocabulary is constantly expanding under the network environment, English will continue to generate new vocabulary. And these new vocabulary will appear in various news media. The use of these vocabularies can not only make the vocabulary of the news further abundant, but also make news content and life more closely. This feature brings advantages to college English teaching, which is unmatched by general English textbooks. Second, it has strong timeliness and abundant content. English news is often the first platform and carrier to show new vocabulary. Persisting in reading English news can not only enable students to get a lot of new information, but also enable students to contact many English contents which are very popular and closely related to life. Most of these contents are not involved in English textbooks. However, students are interested in them. It can be seen that the application of English news discourse in College English teaching can expand their own career and strengthen students' learning motivation on the basis of stimulating students' interest in learning. Third, it provides a more real language learning situation. The creation of this news discourse can improve the vividness and richness of classroom learning, make students familiar with the problems they may encounter in real life, acquire the common expressions, and adapt to the changeable language environment in reality.

Discourse is not the combination of simple words and sentences through grammatical structures, but the synthesis of language points, culture and emotion. Students can experience culture and emotion more through discourse analysis. English reading teaching is the core of college English teaching. In this sense, college English reading teaching should constantly strengthen the cultivation of students' ability of discourse analysis. While improving students' basic language skills, it also trains their ability to use the language in the text. Students' comprehensive language competence includes language knowledge, language skills, cultural awareness, emotional attitude and

learning strategies. However, in actual college English reading teaching, on the one hand, college English teachers pay more attention to the indoctrination of words and grammar knowledge; on the other hand, students are very tired of the teaching mode of only mastering words and grammar in English reading, so they lose interest in English learning. Therefore, the actual teaching of college English reading is in essence contrary to the goal of improving students' comprehensive language ability and cultivating students' emotional and cultural awareness.

4. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF CDA IN THE TEACHING OF READING

Among the college English major courses, reading course is an indispensable and important course. The teaching effect of reading will directly affect the teaching quality and teaching results of English major. Traditional reading teaching focuses on letting students master the literal meaning of articles, often ignoring the social background and social influence behind articles. By analyzing the critical discourse of English news, we can cultivate the critical thinking ability of college students, improve their English ability, and establish the correct outlook on life, values and society. Guiding college students to carry out independent critical discourse analysis in the course of reading teaching for College English majors can improve students' interest in reading, improve reading effect and improve teaching quality.

The following will study the application and enlightenment of CDA in College English reading teaching in China through the analysis of English news discourse.

4.1. The Application of CDA in College English Reading Teaching

4.1.1. CDA in Pre-reading

When you read an article, the first thing everyone looks at is the title, through which you can roughly understand the content of the article. Critical discourse analysis of news headlines can help students to have a deep understanding of media positions and predict the intention and attitude orientation of the text.

Take the case of the five-year-old son of a robber who was accused of being manslaughter by a policeman in the line of duty. Different newspapers use different headlines that reflect very different meanings.

A: PC Shot A boy from 9 inches

B: Robber's son, five, killed in his bed

Newspaper A intentionally draws readers' attention to the perpetrator "PC", implying that it is inescapable

in its responsibility for the incident. While newspaper B shifts the reader's attention entirely from the perpetrator to the robber.

4.1.2. CDA in While-reading

Transitivity analysis in the category of text analysis includes material process, which reflects the process of doing something. By analyzing the actor, the goal and dynamic verb in this process, learners can see the ideology that the speaker wants to emphasize. By analyzing the material processes in the transitive system, the learner validates the predictions made by the title about the idea of the passage.

The following two examples are from New York Times about the criticism of lockdown in China to combat the Coronavirus outbreak.

1) To the surprise of some, the country (China) that concealed and mismanaged the initial outbreak appears to be bringing it under control, at least by its own official figures.

2) Its campaign has come at great cost to people's livelihoods and personal liberties.

In example 1) "conceal" means to hide something especially the truth and "mismanage" means to deal with or manage something badly. These two words shows that the authenticity of China's control over the Coronavirus has been questioned and criticized. And example 2) also criticizes that China's campaign---locking down Wu Han, is at a painful cost to beat the Coronavirus, regardless of people's life and freedom.

4.1.3. CDA in Post-reading

The purpose of CDA after reading English news discourse is to let students understand the social background hidden behind the discourse, the social impact of the article at that time and the social purpose which the author wants to achieve. Through the re-analysis of the discourse, students can clarify the moral of the discourse and summarize their own social experience of the social phenomena contained in the discourse, so that they can understand the society in advance and adapt to the society through reading.

4.2. The Enlightenment of CDA in College English Reading Teaching

Discourse analysis is very important in English reading teaching. Traditional reading teaching adopts bottom-up strategy, in which teachers adopt the teaching sequence of vocabulary - phrase - sentence - paragraph - article. This kind of "grammar-translation" teaching makes students understand language in an isolated and one-sided way, while ignoring the logical relationship of language form and the deep meaning of language

phenomenon in a particular context, thus failing to cultivate students' grammatical awareness and truly improve their intercultural communication ability.^[6] The author believes that the top-down strategy should be adopted in English reading teaching, focusing on the macro understanding of the structure of articles and paying attention to the micro analysis of language, including the analysis of the meaning, syntax and sentences of articles. Only in this way can students effectively improve their communicative ability in English. Specific practices are as follows:

4.2.1. Analyze the macro structure of the discourse and construct the framework of the discourse

In the analysis of discourse structure, according to different genres, teachers should guide students to grasp the main points, select the most representative and most closely related to the communicative function of discourse, and adopt different ways to analyze. The thinking mode of English discourse has a linear structure, that is, sentences and paragraphs are connected in an orderly manner, and are generated from the previous content. Every detail of the article is organized and systematic. Teachers can guide students to analyze the genre of the article from a macro point of view, and then divide paragraphs to build a discourse framework. At the same time, teachers should remind students to identify the development paragraph and the conclusion paragraph, and inspire students to find the topic sentence and supporting sentence inside the paragraph. Teachers can guide students to outline the signal words between paragraphs. The signal words can play a role of cohesion and coherence, indicating that the argument expounded here is in parallel with the previous argument, which is the expansion of the discussion in the previous topic sentence. It just conforms to the argumentative thinking mode, namely the "general-specific" principle. Through this teaching mode, students can be guided to grasp the text structure from a macro perspective.

4.2.2. Focus on the cultural background of the discourse and realize the cross-cultural communication of language

Discourse teaching based on systemic functional grammar requires students to understand the cultural background of discourse. Studying languages from a cultural perspective allows students to explore how the author reflected the background and social values of the time through the form of language. When discussing the application of discourse analysis in English reading teaching, Halliday's systemic-functional grammar theory provides a theoretical framework for discourse analysis, and the teaching method of discourse analysis based on this theory can improve students'

comprehensive ability of language use. Reading teaching is not the accumulation of words and the combination of sentences, but to guide students to understand how the author expresses the writing intention and social value in a specific context, so as to cultivate students' appreciation and critical thinking ability and improve their intercultural communication ability.

5. CONCLUSION

The application of CDA in reading class can improve students' ability of discourse comprehension, analysis and appreciation. Reading course is a core course for college English majors, and the selection of teaching materials is the key. As a kind of public discourse, news discourse comes from the official and is influenced by the ruling ideology. It plays a great role in modern society and can affect people's attitude towards things and the overall ideology. At the same time, it has the characteristics of immediacy and objectivity, carrying a large amount of information, and is a rare reading material. Therefore, CDA based on news discourse is of great practical significance to cultivate critical reading ability and independent thinking consciousness of college students.

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