

Promoting Development of Undergraduates' English Learning Strategies---Teaching Mode Exploration in Schools of Applied Technology

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ABSTRACT: In order to improve the level of English education in schools of applied technology, based on the extensive reference to the experience of both domestic and foreign language educators and the analysis of the present situation of English teaching and learning in schools of applied technology, the paper points out that it is necessary to train strategy consciousness as well as training of learning strategies in English teaching and actual operation methods. It also puts forward the principles that should be followed in English teaching in schools of applied technology besides specific teaching model conception.

KEYWORD: College English; Teaching mode; Learning strategies; Formative education

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, in order to improve the teaching level of college English education in China, in the process of exploring the reform of college English teaching, many university English teachers have carried out empirical researches about the English learning strategies from various points of view. Wang and some other teacher's questionnaire survey results showed that very few students employ cognitive strategies in English learning, they put forward that English teachers should pay attention to each strategy and emphasize strategy training in English teaching, so as to influence the students to learn how to use learning strategies (Wang & Zhang 2012). After practical research in application of meta-cognitive learning strategies in college English learning, Du and Zheng drew a conclusion that the use of meta-cognitive strategies can help to improve efficiency of learners' independent knowledge construction, promote the improvement of English writing, make the students get more interested in learning, enhance the ability of independent thinking and autonomous learning and English language skills, but also drive the college English teaching reform, so as to effectively improve the efficiency of college English teaching, reach the goal to training quality talents (Du 2012, Zheng 2010). Ma Gang's research results show that: after training, English learners became more active in using strategies and more interested in learning English. It is feasible to conduct English learning strategies training in college English teaching (Ma & Wang 2010). After

some comprehensive research, Zhang found that certain strategies are applied at each learning stage, and the key to success is to be flexible and applicable, and strategy training is conditioned by a number of factors (Zhang et al. 2011). Multiple perspectives of the research achievements mentioned above prove that learning strategies are influenced by various factors, learning strategies are divers and uncertain. And they do have a positive transfer effect on English learning, and those research findings also confirmed that the learning strategy training is effective, especially those integrated into language teaching is meaningful, necessary and feasible.

However, compared with the traditional meaning of undergraduate students, undergraduate students studying in schools of applied technology have their specialty. This paper will not only analyze the current situation of application of learning strategy in schools of applied technology, but also put forward some teaching conception about promoting the development of English learning strategies.

2 ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES

2.1 *Concept of English learning strategies*

Learning strategy refers to learners' understanding of learning, and steps, rules, methods and techniques, etc. adopted in the learning process (Zhang & Duan 2012). Because of different points of view, scholars in different countries always failed to reach agreement on the concept and connotation of language learning strategies. Thus, there still are a

lot of differences in the understanding of the English learning strategy. At present, domestic researchers tend to define English learning strategy as: some learning methods, techniques and control methods adopted by English learners, who want to improve the efficiency of English learning and make the subjective conscious choice. It can be either implicit rules of the system or explicit steps and procedures. Learners use strategy aiming to improve the learning efficiency; the essence of strategy is the wisdom of the learners; it may be either the inner psychological action or external activities. In combination with the practical situation of college English teaching in China, English learning strategies can be classified as follows:

2.1.1 *Met cognitive strategies*

Those are used by learners in English learning, planning, setting goals, self correcting, estimating and reasonably improving study methods, which Includes: planning strategy, monitoring strategy, the self-regulation strategy.

2.1.2 *Cognitive strategy*

Those are learners' language information processing methods and techniques, which has two basic functions: one is effective information processing and finishing; the other is classifying the information system to store.

2.1.3 *Memory strategy*

Those are memory methods, such as an image mnemonic system, interest mnemonic system, characteristics of memory method, piecwise mnemonic system, comparison mnemonic system, self repeating, etc.

2.1.4 *Emotional strategy*

Refers to the learners' methods to regulate and manage emotions and feelings. In the process of English learning, learners adopt emotional strategies to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes, etc.

2.1.5 *Communication strategy*

Communication strategy refers to the methods used in order to reach the goal of communication when finding hard to express themselves in English, and the learners want to use some methods to make up for the lack of grammar or vocabulary.

2.2 *Current situation of undergraduates' learning strategies*

Application undergraduate education is a new thing in the process of development of higher education in China. As the students come from secondary vocational and technical schools, they only master a

few translating skills, vocabulary, a bit grammar knowledge and they can hardly understand neither speaking nor written English, not to mention writing in English. Their poor English foundation seriously affects their learning effect. Students' awareness of learning strategies is not systematic at all, some students even know less about learning strategies. Most of the students hold very passive attitude towards English learning and heavily depend on the teacher. In the process of conducting task, they are good at neither adjusting anxiety, nor organizing, planning, or adjusting their learning activities consciously. Moreover, they can't reflect or evaluate their learning properly and pay little attention to learning methods during the learning process.

3 TEACHING MODE TO DEVELOP LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.1 *Principles to be followed*

Existing research results show that during the process of mastery and use of English learning strategies, the learners are affected by a variety of internal and external factors. So the specific application strategies in English language learning are different at different time, under different situation from person to person. That means there are no definite learning methods. Teachers are difficult to utilize the limited class hour to teach students, many specific learning strategies one by one. Therefore, in order to promote the learning strategies to develop, the principles listed below must be followed in classroom teaching.

3.1.1 *People-oriented, emotion-leaded*

Teachers should always pay attention to the effects that emotional factors have in the process of teaching to the teaching effect and learning effect. The construction of a harmonious relationship between teachers and students is critical. In the harmonious relationship between teachers and students, both respect and trust each other. Students are willing to accept teachers' guiding methods as well as language knowledge transference. Therefore, they would like to cooperate with teachers to complete the study task on their own initiative. Besides, the harmonious relationship between teachers and students can also reduce the students' anxiety, negative emotions, and stimulate their potential.

3.1.2 *Selective tasks intensively*

Application undergraduate students' English level is equivalent to the beginners', therefore, the teacher must select teaching contents, practice tasks and learning strategies needed to complete the task. In addition, be sure make teaching contents "fewer but

better" because selective teaching contents can benefit students a lot to focus on learning tasks, target, reduce anxiety and increase interest in learning.

3.1.3 *Enlighten students by guidance, step by step*

Teachers must present teaching contents from easy to difficult step by step, interlock knowledge, successively connect. Teachers have to grasp the opportune moments and make every effort to stop short in order to achieve timely inspired by induction, so that students are able to think actively, explore and reasoning, summarize and stimulate students potential.

3.1.4 *Gain new insights through reviewing old material*

Attach equal importance to both studying and thinking. Old materials are the basis of the new insights, likewise, new insights are developed old ones. Review is the most basic learning method. but application undergraduate students' foundation is weak, have enough English knowledge system, fragmented. To master the use of language knowledge in the process of memory strategy is very important, and revision is a basic means of strengthening the memory. Accordingly, teachers should pay attention to imparting the front of the new knowledge and learn the old knowledge, and guide students to active thinking in the classroom, found that the connection between the old and new knowledge, thus causes the student to review the old knowledge, deepened the memory, and understanding of new knowledge, analysis and grasp of results have been achieved.

3.2 *The implementation steps*

3.2.1 *The investigation and study for the breakthrough point*

Based on the actual situation of students' English learning questionnaire and visit, we can learn how a student masters and uses English learning strategies, also can effectively cultivate strategy consciousness, and guide students find their own problems in the learning process, to take the initiative to correct bad learning habits, learning strategy further active acquisition.

3.2.2 *Establish lifelong learning idea*

The cultivation of English learning strategy is a long-term process, unable to realize the crash. Specific English learning strategies are varied, the teacher should be the cultivation of learning strategies clearly written into the teaching outline, in

the teaching process, the teacher's main task is to help students develop learning strategies and to master the most basic learning strategy, the purpose is to eventually reach students can actively explore unceasingly, accumulated for individual learning strategy, and will have a strategy applied to lifelong English learning activities.

3.2.3 *The construction of teaching content system*

Setting the teaching content, in accordance with the laws of students' cognitive and emotional development, combined with science teaching methods step by step in order to improve language learning and training, and training of learning strategies. Su Dingfang once put forward one of the five major functions of foreign language teaching is to train students' learning strategy (Su 2010). Application undergraduate course of English teaching content should include two aspects: the guidance of specific language knowledge teaching and learning strategies and training. In view of the application more than undergraduate classes for beginner, not suitable for separate heard with reading and writing, teaching, it's better to give an integrated lesson around the same topic every time. That is characterized by diversified in forms, teaching content and improve the content such as vocabulary, grammar, structure, repetition rate, different practice and requirement of the application of learning strategies, this pattern must be beneficial to stimulate students' interest in learning, promote students' positive thinking, extend the focus of the state, help overcome self-doubt, fear, anxiety, such as to build up confidence.

3.2.4 *Scientifically evaluating and emphasizing application*

Science evaluation emphasizes application. Focus on using interview way to students' learning strategies and application of master knowledge, students and teachers face to face communication alone, often more honest than answers the questionnaire, so as to get information is more credible. Suggestions on the basis of questionnaire survey, random individual interview. Grasp the student to the language learning strategy use of and facilitate teachers adjust teaching plan, further promote the formation of students' learning strategies, and to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching quality.

3.2.5 *The main contents of the learning strategy training*

According to characteristics of applied undergraduate English learning, mainly implement the following learning strategy training in English teaching.

Table. English learning Strategy training content of applied technology undergraduates

Learning strategy types	Learning strategy content
control strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in accordance with the schedule, make a detailed English study plan. 2. summarize the learned and able to take the initiative to review and sum them up. 3. exchange English learning experience with others, employ effective learning methods.
listening strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. listen to modest material intensively, listening practice followed by reading materials. 2. pay attention to the pronunciation, intonation, naturally read aloud the words, sentences accurately. 3. forecast questions according to question stem, options, keywords and correlative words. 4. keep calm in the process of listening, take a deep breath, calm mood, never be impatient when hearing anything hard to understand. 5. with the help of nonverbal information (such as tone, intonation, background sound) to reason and overcome the anxiety.
resource strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. recommend, and guide the students to apply some books, paper, dictionary as well as electronic dictionary. 2. notice English language appeared in daily media: Internet, television, magazines and newspapers.
vocabulary-learning strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. make sentences with new words, phrases, or sentence grammar rules in the text in writing or speaking to deepen memory. 2. while memorizing words, associate the word word roots and related synonyms or antonyms. 3. learning and concluding rules of word-formation. 4. turning negative words into positive words, improving the word repetition rate, feel a sense of achievement, so as to encourage yourself.
reading strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. when reading English, skimming to understand the main idea first, then reread in detail. 2. while reading, guess the meaning of each paragraph with the aid of situation and context. 3. when encountering new words in reading, guess meaning of the words according to the context. 4. when finding hard to understand the meaning of sentences, analyze the sentence structure. 5. often review the text studied before.
Translation, writing, learning strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pay attention to the understanding of cultural background. 2. combined with the tense, voice, vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structure analysis for translation practice. 3. in the translation process pay attention to the differences of expressions in both English and Chinese word order. 4. copy practical writing paradigm for writing practice. 5. recite and write the typical sentence patterns in applied writing.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Students of English teaching in the application technology of preliminary idea is: English teaching should follow the principle of "according to their aptitude", strengthen the learning method of "gain new insights through reviewing old materials", integrating students' strategic awareness cultivating and strategy training in language teaching, teaching content should be classic but not extensive". Though this idea is not mature enough, but we are sure that firstly, the learning strategies for applying to undergraduate students learning English is helpful. Secondly, a learning strategy is not innate; they can be acquired by cultivating and training during English learning and teaching. Thirdly, the application of undergraduate students was already adults, the cultivation of learning strategies for adults effect is more obvious, and more urgent.

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