

The Construction of Multi-dimensional Interaction Mode in College English Teaching*

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Abstract—With the increasing importance of English in current society, it's an urgent task for college English teachers to conduct research on ways of improving college English teaching and learning. In this study, an effective teaching mode---Multi-dimensional interaction mode is trying to be constructed based on the theory of constructivism, communicative language teaching method and interactive teaching mode, in the meantime, the application and practice of this mode is analyzed, and characteristics and effects of this mode are also discussed.

Index Terms—college English teaching, interactive teaching mode, multi-dimensional interaction

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of international trade and globalization, the importance of English is increasingly apparent and the so called English Mania is still prevailing in most parts of China. From primary schools to universities, teachers and students are making great efforts to learn English but often without satisfactory results. At present, college English teaching is undergoing a reform with the purpose of cultivating college graduates who are skillful at English listening, speaking, reading and writing. It's an important issue for college teachers to conduct research regarding how to achieve this goal, especially how to help students develop their ability in English communication. With the fast development of educational technology, at present most college classrooms have been equipped with computers and projectors and have become multimedia classrooms. With the assistance of these equipment, classroom teaching and learning has taken on a new look. Students can enjoy more vivid video and audio materials as well as pictures, tables, diagrams, which will help their understanding of the texts and enrich their knowledge. In order to make the most of the multimedia classrooms and achieve the best result of classroom teaching and learning, an effective teaching mode---Multi-dimensional interaction mode is trying to be constructed in this paper based on the theory of constructivism, communicative language teaching method and interactive teaching mode, in the meantime, the application and practice of this mode is analyzed, and characteristics and effects of this mode are also discussed.

II. RELATED THEORIES

A. *Constructivism Learning Theory*

Constructivism is a philosophical framework or theory of learning which argues humans construct meaning from current knowledge structures. Constructivism was first proposed by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who didn't agree with the traditional view that children's play was aimlessly unimportant. On the contrary, he regarded children's play as an important and necessary part of their cognitive development. He suggested that through processes of accommodation and assimilation, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. The cognitive development theory "Children are scientists" by Piaget (1950), along with the historical cultural development psychology theory by Vygotsky (1978), the meaningful learning theory by Ausubel (1968) and the discovery learning theory by Bruner (1961) lay a foundation for the formalization of Constructivism. In 1980s constructivism began to be influential in the western world. British scholars Williams. M and Burden. R L (1977) proposed the theory of social constructivism in their book "Psychology for Language Teachers", in which they discussed the four factors influencing learning: teachers, learners, tasks and contexts. These four factors are not irrelevant to each other, instead, they interact with each other and the process of learning is a dynamic process with the four factors interacting with one another. The teaching concept of constructivism reflect in the change of teachers' roles, who are changing to the assistant and facilitator from the introducer and deliverer of knowledge. According to this theory, learning is not a simple one-way process form teachers to students, instead, learning occurs through the construction of meaning.

In the educational sphere, constructivism arose in the 1990s in the western world and is accepted by scholars in China since 21st century. This theory has exerted a profound influence on foreign language teaching in our country since its introduction as can be seen in the aspect of teaching concept, teaching mode, faculty training and so on. Research concerning constructivism is one of the hottest topics in our foreign language teaching field. Teachers and experts study and analyze this theory from different angles such as its inspiration to foreign language teaching, its application in

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classroom language teaching and its assistance in taking the advantage of the multimedia classroom equipment.

It is worth noting that constructivism itself is not a particular pedagogy. It just describes how learning should happen. In short, the theory of constructivism suggests that learners construct knowledge.

B. Communicative Language Teaching Method

Communicative language teaching method is a method aiming to enhance language function and cultivate students' communicative ability including the improvement of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It holds that language is a tool for social communication, so teaching should be arranged according to the specific communicative context like hospital, bank, airport, etc. The emphasis of teaching should be designed according to the students' majors and possible future careers so as to improve the practicability, objective, and interest of teaching.

Communicative teaching method is an effective method which can train students' ability of language application and it was introduced to our country by well-known scholars like Hu wenzhong (1982) in the early 1980s and it plays a significant role in the field of foreign language teaching. The objective of college English teaching is to cultivate the students' comprehensive ability of language application, especially the ability of listening and speaking as as to communicate smoothly both in oral and written form. Communicative teaching method mainly deals with a couple of relationship: the relationship of teacher and students, and the relationship of fluency and accuracy.

C. Interactive Teaching Mode

Interaction theory originated from Europe in the 20th century. It was put forward by Mead and improved and perfected by his student Blumer (1980) who proposed symbol interaction theory and other later researchers. 1950s witnessed the beginning of interacting teaching approach, which focuses on researching how teaching approaches affect interaction between teachers and students. American professor Palincsar (1986) from Michigan University proposed the concept of "interactive" classroom teaching, and claimed that students are the main part of the teaching process, students' acquisition of knowledge is a process of continuous self-improvement and self-construction, during which students need to establish an interactive cooperative relationship with others so as to improve their own ability to study, while the teachers only need to provide students with instruction, assistance and a kind of studying atmosphere. Interactive teaching has always been a focus in international education and language teaching field. Ashley, B.J (1969) classified the classroom teacher-student interaction patterns into three categories: teacher-centered, students-centered, knowledge-centered. In fact, interactive teaching approach is a form of development in communicative teaching approach and aims to transform the traditional teaching to the interactive teaching. Hatch holds that the process of learning through interaction is equally important for language learners.

Under the guideline of interactive theory, classroom teaching and learning should be based on the interaction between teacher and students, students and students, even learners and learning materials and learning equipment, meanwhile, teaching and learning process should be in a state of dynamic cooperation and interdependence between teachers and students.

III. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL INTERACTIVE MODE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

A. The Concept of Multi-dimensional Interactive Mode in College English Teaching

Interactive teaching mode regards the teaching process as a dynamic, interactive process and is a creative and practical teaching mode. It reflects in the interaction between different factors such as students, teachers and students, learners and learning materials, people and computers, people and internet, etc. The interaction between teacher and students mainly reflects in the communication and interaction in and outside classroom, the accomplishment of group assignments through cooperative learning method, and so on. Many college teachers and researcher have conducted studies on it, for example, Guo Jianjun (2005) has published a book entitled "An exploration of the construction of multi-dimensional teaching mode".

The so-called "multi-dimensional" refers to the multiple factors and layers related to teaching. Firstly, we have multiple interactive parties. In multi-dimensional interactive teaching mode, teacher and students, students and students will receive the information from each other and will interact with each other, and every individual and every group learn as well influence each other. Secondly, we have multiple interactive contents. The interaction between teacher and students includes not only knowledge of English language but also exchange of diverse concepts, emotions, cultures and so forth. Hence, the teacher and students will know more about each other which will help the teacher to modify their teaching methods or materials to meet the different needs of different students. Thirdly, we have multiple interactive media. The implement of multi-dimensional interactive teaching in college English classroom must depend on the advanced multi-media equipment, which helps to change the traditional teaching mode with a blackboard and chalk. With the help of multi-media equipment, students can get access to the learning material in a more vivid way with audio and video aspects of the materials both presented for them. In this research, the interactive factors go beyond people and classroom, including not only teacher and students but also other teaching and learning media and places.

The "multi-dimensional" interactive mode in college English teaching has its own distinctive features. Firstly, in comparison to traditional classroom teaching, this mode will be much more attractive to students in that it provides students with more multiple and more abundant learning materials in a more flexible and interactive teaching and

learning mode. Then, with this flexibility and interactivity, different students will find their own interests and values in different learning procedure and enhance their confidence in learning English. Eventually, with the help of the teaching mode, there will be win-win in college English classroom teaching and learning. On one hand, in the process of participating in classroom activities students can benefit from as well as contribute to classroom teaching and learning; on the other hand, teachers will also enrich their own knowledge and teaching experiences from the interaction with students in classroom.

B. The Teaching Objective of Multi-dimensional Interactive Mode in College English Teaching

According to the college English syllabus issued by the ministry of education, the objective of college English teaching is to cultivate the students' comprehensive English application ability, especially their listening and speaking ability, which will help them to communicate effectively in their future study, career and social interaction. Meanwhile, their autonomous learning ability should also be enhanced so as to meet the need of the social development and international communication. In this research, the construction of multi-dimensional interactive mode in college English teaching is based on this syllabus and adds its own features with the objectives as follows: In listening ability, students should be able to understand English classes, lectures, daily conversations and English broadcast and TV programs at the speed of 130-150 words per minute. As for speaking ability, students should be able to use English to communicate with each other in the process of learning and be able to discuss a certain topic in English as well as make English presentations after some preparation with correct pronunciation and intonation. In comprehension ability, students should be able to understand English articles at the speed of 70 words every minute. And in completing fast reading tasks their speed should reach 100 words per minute. The ability of scanning and skimming is also required. They should be able to locate certain details and summarize main ideas of different articles. In writing aspect, students should be able to finish writing tasks like narration, argumentation, exposition and letters, notices etc. They should be able to finish a composition of at least 120 words within half an hour and translate short articles of about 150 words within half an hour.

To sum up, the construction of multi-dimensional interactive mode in college English teaching mode is in consistent with the requirement of college English teaching reform with the purpose of improve students' comprehensive English ability. The objective of this novel mode of teaching is in consistent with the above mentioned teaching objectives proposed by the college English syllabus.

C. The Construction of Multi-dimensional Interactive Mode in College English Teaching

Multi-dimensional interactive mode is a multiple pattern of interaction instead of the traditional way of teacher-student interaction. This mode focuses on students-centered activities in which students study actively and autonomously, meanwhile teachers instruct and inspire students to explore knowledge based upon the above mentioned theories. In this paper, an integral and meaningful multi-dimensional interactive mode in college English teaching is trying to be constructed based on teaching theories through teaching activities, aiming to motivate students' study interests and improve their English study. The "multi-dimensional interaction" in this paper mainly refers to three dimensional interaction consisting of the interaction of various factors in classroom; the interaction of classroom teaching and after-class learning; and the interaction of students' knowledge in their major and in English language.

1. Dimension one -- the construction of interaction among various factors in classroom

In traditional college English classroom, teaching procedures go in sequence of vocabulary and phrases explaining, text translation, exercise correction. The teachers' teaching contents consist of a large number of words, phrases, example sentences, it is the teacher who does the most of classroom discourse and the students have very few opportunities to participate in the classroom learning. The most part of students' activity is to take down notes of what the teacher teaches. As a result, students have very little interests in college English classroom learning. In order to overcome this shortcoming of college English classroom teaching, the construction of a brand new interactive mode in college English classroom has profound significance. The procedure of classroom teaching includes a sequence of classroom activities like students' oral presentation, teachers' lead-in, students' group work, the study and analysis of text, the practice of key words and expressions, group discussions, role play, etc.

In constructing this multi-dimensional interactive mode, firstly, the interaction among various factors in classroom is constructed. In dimension one, the construction of multi-dimensional classroom interactions focuses on four aspects: The interaction between teachers and students; the interactions between students; the interactions between teachers; and the interaction between students and information technology.

In this mode, teachers shift their roles from dominators of the classroom to the partners of learning. Teachers' are on the mission to assist students to discover and explore the knowledge, inspire the students to think, challenge and find solutions to problems as much as they can with the purpose of maximizing their learning ability. Classroom organization is the key to this transformation. In the process of teaching, multiple ways of teaching should be employed such as role play, classroom presentation, group work, group discussion, games, quizzes, and so on.

Then, the interactions between students are to be constructed to comprise the first dimension of this multi-dimensional interactive mode in classroom teaching. Students learn knowledge in the process of diverse activities in classroom. They will be able to enrich their knowledge as well as enhance their ability in the cooperation with their peers. Studies by Forman and Cazden (1985) suggest that students who are working together and having peer support

could increase oral exchange and be led to higher levels of task engagement and problem solving.

Nextly, interactions between teachers are also an important aspect in the first dimension. In one classroom, there is only one teacher who is implementing the teaching task. But how well the teacher conducts the teaching depends on a variety of factors among which the interaction between associates and experienced peers is of crucial importance due to the fact that in doing so teachers will have more ideas as to how to design a classroom teaching activities and have more information and inspiration as to how to demonstrate the related knowledge to the students.

Lastly in this dimension are the interactions between students and information technology. In this information age, college campus can be said to be an absolutely digital space. Students are surrounded by information technology everywhere and they have access to the internet almost 24/7. They have been accustomed to obtaining information via internet. As a result, classroom teaching should make full use of information technology such as computers, internet, real-time message, online homework, etc. Students' interaction with information technology will have great influence on their motivation of learning, acquisition of knowledge, feedback of classroom teaching effect and communication with their teachers.

2. Dimension two -- the construction of interaction of classroom teaching and after-class learning

Classroom teaching is the main channel of college English teaching. But with the abundance of English knowledge of the limit of classroom time, only learning English in classroom is far from enough. So classroom teaching and learning is only a part of college English studying. How to activate the students to make more efforts to learn English in their after-class time to assimilate the classroom knowledge and to improve learning efficiency is an important issue. So in this study, the construction of multi-dimensional interactive mode in college English classroom teaching also takes the construction of interaction between classroom teaching and after-class learning as an essential task. To achieve this goal, teachers will seriously design the students' after-class assignment to make an effective connection between classroom teaching and after-class learning so as to lengthen the teaching time and train students' ability to study autonomously. For example, students are assigned group work in every unit with two groups each time. Then in class, one group will make an oral presentation of the related background information of this unit and the other group will give a detailed introduction of the contents of the text as well as an analysis of the text structure. In this way, students have to be engaged in after-class learning and make good preparation for every English class. What's more, in classroom they will participate more in the teaching process.

3. Dimension three -- the construction of interaction of students' knowledge in their major and in English language.

One obstacle is college English teaching is that many teachers find that some students lack interest in studying English. In part, the reason is that they feel there is little connection of English with their majors and they feel there is no use to learn English so they lack the motive to learn it seriously. From this perspective, in the construction of multi-dimensional interactive mode of college English teaching, it is advocated that students' knowledge in their major and in English language should be combined in the way of adding more English materials related to their major to classroom English teaching, organizing more activities concerning their major characteristics, and so on. Generally speaking students will have more interests in learning their major knowledge and thus teaching effect and learning efficiency will be promoted at the same time.

IV. FEATURES AND EFFECTS OF THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL INTERACTIVE MODE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

A. The Transformation of Teachers' Roles

For a long time, it is the teacher who dominates our classroom and is the subject of the classroom activities while students only passively receive the knowledge and are the objects of learning. Students educated in this way tend to be dependent on teacher's explanation of the knowledge, lack of creativity and autonomous learning ability, which result in the fact that they can't have a good command of the language. In this mode, teachers transform their conventional cramming method of teaching, establish modern teaching concept, shift their own roles, serve as a guide, an organizer, and a cooperater in the process of learning. What's more, teachers should clarify that students should become the subjects of learning and help the students improve their autonomous learning ability and communicative competence as well as realizing the importance of language output to language learning. Thus students will learn actively instead of passively and their autonomous learning ability will be cultivated eventually.

B. The Trigger of Students' Learning Enthusiasm

In this mode, the interaction between teacher and students is strengthened. This dynamic, two-way interaction contributes to trigger students' learning enthusiasm and transform the situation of teacher dominating the class, information only flowing one-way from the teacher to students. In English teaching, both the teacher and students should be the participants of the learning process and their discourse and activities comprise the the main contents of the classroom teaching and learning. Researches show that teacher discourses consist of three parts, that is, lecturing, questioning and feedback while students' discourses are mainly composed of answers to teacher's questions and responses to teacher's feedback. In traditional classrooms, teacher's discourses account for as much as 70% to 90% of class time and the classroom teaching is dominated by the teacher like a mono-drama of the teacher. As a result, the students' participation time in classroom is very limited and it's difficult for the teacher to know the degree of the

students' understanding and master of the knowledge. Thus, the lack of interaction between the teacher and students is adverse to the cultivation of students' language application capability and the teacher's understanding of students' problems and difficulties.

In this mode, in order to achieve ideal classroom teaching effect, make classroom atmosphere more active, teachers adopt proper interaction pattern to strengthen the interaction between the teacher and students. In this way the students will actively take part in the classroom activities and become the main participant of the learning process, so as to shift language teaching from teacher-centered to learning-centered. The multi-dimensional interaction between teacher and students can be diversified. For example, teacher questioning- students answering- teacher feedback can be transformed into student questioning—students answering—students evaluating/feedback.

C. *The Implement of Student-centered Activities and Task-based Teaching*

In traditional classroom teaching, it is the teacher who controls the process of the teaching process and the classroom communication and interaction is mainly through the questions asked by the teacher and the answers given by the students, which makes language learning process a boring experience. To solve this problem, in this mode, teachers design more student-centered activities to involve more students in the learning process and during which, assign students specific tasks to implement task-based teaching. The tasks can be in various forms and with diverse purposes. To finish the tasks, students must engage in the real interaction between each other and will improve their comprehensive language ability in the long run. For instance, group discussion is a good method of student-centered interactive activity and has gained popularity among teachers and students. The teacher can divide the students into different groups with 5 to 6 students in each group according to the total number of the students. The group members will discuss a topic assigned by the teacher, form their own viewpoint and make a presentation on the topic to share their opinions with other students. The representative who makes the speech is not fixed, all the members can do it in turn. After their presentation, comments and feedback will be given to them by the teacher as well as the students. This kind of student-centered interaction arouses great interest in students' language learning and provides the students with precious opportunities of practicing speaking English in public and students' ability to think in English is strengthened in the process as well.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the construction of multi-dimensional mode in college English teaching can be of significance to the improvement of college English classroom teaching and students' learning effect. And this study can also be expected to benefit college English teaching research and teacher-researchers in terms of teaching practices in general.

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