

Original Paper

Practical Exploration of Myanmar Language Teaching Model in Applied-Oriented Universities under the OBE Concept: A Case Study of the Jewelry School of West Yunnan University of Applied Sciences

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Abstract

The outcome-oriented OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept has far-reaching implications in the exploration of new curriculum teaching models in Applied-Oriented Universities. It helps teachers and students clarify learning goals, highlights the cultivation of practical application abilities, and provides personalized learning and evaluation methods. This concept has significant guiding value for improving students' Myanmar language ability and application skills. This article takes the Jewelry School of West Yunnan University of Applied Sciences as an example to analyze the current situation of Myanmar language teaching in this institution. Through specific practical approaches such as clarifying teaching goals, optimizing teaching content, exploring diversified teaching methods, and reforming evaluation methods, the Myanmar language courses under the OBE concept are discussed as teaching models.

Keywords

OBE concept, Applied-Oriented Universities, Myanmar language teaching, teaching model

1. Introduction

West Yunnan University of Applied Science is one of the first batch of applied technology public undergraduate universities in the country, and the School of Jewelry is one of its three distinctive

colleges, located in Tengchong City, Baoshan City, Yunnan Province. The college offers Myanmar language courses for several reasons: First, Tengchong is located on the border of Yunnan and Myanmar and shares a border with Myanmar. The geographical location determines the close connection between Tengchong and Myanmar. The Myanmar language courses offered by the college can better meet the local demand for Myanmar language talents and promote economic and cultural exchanges in border areas. Second, Myanmar is rich in resources, especially in gems and jade, providing unique advantages. The college offers specialty majors such as gemstones, product design, arts and crafts, and jewelry. It has a gemstone-related research and appraisal center and offers Myanmar language courses to help strengthen economic cooperation with Myanmar and expand markets and resources. Third, offering Myanmar language courses increases employment opportunities. Talents who master Myanmar language skills have competitive advantages in fields such as international trade and cross-border cooperation. Offering Myanmar language courses can provide students with broader employment opportunities and development space. Fourth, the university's compulsory foreign language courses have implemented tiered foreign language teaching in recent years. For students with weak English foundations, courses in other languages have been introduced from scratch to obtain college foreign language credits instead of English. Thus, "College Foreign Language (Myanmar)" courses were introduced. Fifth, Myanmar is a close neighbor of China, and the two countries have a long history of cultural exchanges. Learning Myanmar can not only promote cultural exchanges but also enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples. Therefore, the college offers Myanmar language courses.

2. Current Status of Myanmar Language Teaching at Our College

2.1 The current teaching model is still dominated by the traditional teacher-centered, textbook-led teaching method. Teachers usually impart language knowledge to students through lectures, demonstrations, and writing on the blackboard. Students mainly learn through textbooks and the teacher's explanations, passively receiving knowledge. As a component of public basic university foreign language courses, Myanmar language courses differ from college English courses. Myanmar language is learned from scratch. In the early stage, the basic knowledge of pronunciation is mainly taught. The traditional teaching model is suitable for this stage, but it does not meet the requirements for the later stage of language improvement for students.

2.2 The teaching materials and majors in Applied-Oriented Universities lack specificity. Firstly, there is a shortage of comprehensive and up-to-date Myanmar teaching materials. Currently, there are few systematic Myanmar language textbooks available. The mainstream Myanmar language textbooks in circulation include two classic series: "Myanmar Language Tutorial" (2004) and "Basic Myanmar Language" (2012), which are widely used in most universities. These textbooks cover a range of topics including culture, politics, economics, and geography, making them comprehensive and practical. However, they are all first editions published relatively early. Secondly, there is a deficiency in

professional teaching materials that integrate Myanmar language with specific majors. There are no specialized Myanmar language materials tailored for specific disciplines such as “Myanmar for Jewelry Professionals” or “Myanmar for Business”. These materials lack relevance to the majors offered in Applied-Oriented Universities and fail to address the specific needs of students in these fields. Consequently, there is a lack of high-quality teaching content that aligns with the practical requirements of applied university majors.

2.3 The teaching content predominantly revolves around basic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, with a focus on explaining and discussing language structure and rules. Both written and spoken styles are taught concurrently, yet there is a notable deficiency in cultivating language practice and application skills. Often, the grammar and vocabulary knowledge acquired in the classroom proves challenging to apply directly in real-life communication and writing situations, resulting in students’ inadequate proficiency in practical language use. Particularly, idiomatic expressions in spoken Myanmar and other highly practical content are typically confined to textbooks and are not effectively integrated into language communication.

2.4 Student participation is not high, students lack interest in class content, and lack motivation to learn. Due to various influencing factors, Myanmar is less attractive to students than other small languages with strong cultural soft power. Students cannot clearly understand the value and significance of learning Myanmar, which may lead to a lack of enthusiasm for investment. learning process.

2.5 The teaching evaluation method is singular, primarily relying on test scores as the main evaluation criteria, leading to a lack of comprehensive assessment of students’ overall abilities, particularly their practical proficiency in using the Myanmar language. Relying solely on test scores as the evaluation criterion may overlook students’ practical language skills. Language learning encompasses various aspects, including mastering grammar and vocabulary, as well as developing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and communicative abilities, all of which are crucial. However, if the assessment method only measures students’ academic performance through written examinations, it may neglect their comprehensive abilities in these areas.

3. Significance of Exploring Myanmar Language Teaching Models in Applied-Oriented Universities under the OBE Concept

The OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept is a learner-centered and learning result-oriented educational philosophy. It emphasizes that educational activities should revolve around predetermined learning outcomes rather than simply focusing on delivering teaching content. (Zhang, Zhang, Wang, et al., 2020) At the core of the OBE philosophy is ensuring that students achieve predetermined learning outcomes, typically assessed through a series of evaluations. (Liu, WAN, & Yuan, 2016) Through an analysis of the teaching status of Myanmar language courses at our college and a synthesis of research and experiences from previous scholars applying the OBE concept to English language teaching, we have discovered that the OBE concept is not only highly suitable for Applied-Oriented Universities but

also for Myanmar language courses in colleges and universities. It exhibits strong applicability for second foreign language students.

3.1 The OBE concept aligns well with Applied-Oriented Universities, reflecting the institution's educational philosophy of integrating industry and education, fostering school-enterprise cooperation, merging work and study, and combining knowledge with practice. This concept is also in harmony with academic principles centered on integrating international perspectives with local needs and merging technological application with academic research. The OBE teaching model enhances teaching effectiveness and learning quality, ignites students' interest and initiative in learning, and thereby addresses their actual needs and employment requirements more effectively. Firstly, the OBE concept underscores the attainment of learning outcomes and the cultivation of practical and applicative skills, thereby clarifying teaching objectives and aligning them closely with students' actual needs. Secondly, it prioritizes student participation and self-directed learning, emphasizing students' autonomy and active engagement in the learning process. Lastly, the OBE concept emphasizes evaluation and feedback, stressing timely assessment and feedback on students' learning outcomes, which caters to the personalized and differentiated learning needs of students in Applied-Oriented Universities.

3.2 The OBE concept is highly applicable to Myanmar language courses in colleges and universities. Firstly, the OBE concept can effectively guide the goals and expected outcomes of Myanmar language courses. Teachers can establish clear learning objectives, such as mastering specific grammatical knowledge, expanding vocabulary, and enhancing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. This approach makes the teaching process more focused and efficient, aiding students in grasping key learning points and improving the relevance and effectiveness of their learning.

Secondly, under the OBE educational concept, greater emphasis can be placed on enhancing the practical application abilities of Myanmar language students in colleges and universities. For students studying a second foreign language like Myanmar, the primary goal is typically to be proficient in using the language in real-life situations and professional settings. The educational model under the OBE concept assists students in clarifying their learning objectives and concentrates on developing their practical application skills, enabling them to communicate fluently and express themselves effectively in authentic contexts.

Finally, the OBE concept prioritizes personalized learning and flexible evaluation. Recognizing that students possess diverse learning abilities and styles, educators employ a range of flexible and varied teaching methods along with personalized evaluation approaches. This ensures that the learning needs of individual students are met, leading to the achievement of personalized learning goals.

4. Reforming Myanmar Language Classroom Teaching Practices under the OBE Concept

The OBE concept emphasizes learning outcomes and student development, along with the clarity of learning goals, evaluation emphasis, support for personalized learning, and the pursuit of continuous improvement in the educational process. Acharya pointed out that implementing the OBE education

model mainly involves four steps: defining learning outcomes, achieving learning outcomes, evaluating learning outcomes, and utilizing learning outcomes. (SPADY, 1994) Building upon this framework and considering the characteristics of the Myanmar language course, four components are designed, focusing on teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, and evaluation methods.

4.1 Formulation and Clarification of Teaching Objectives

When colleges and universities implement the OBE concept, they should begin with the actual academic conditions to accurately understand changes in students' abilities and needs, providing a reliable foundation for establishing clear teaching goals. (Liu & Yu, 2013) The primary objective of Applied-Oriented Universities is to nurture applied talents. Therefore, the foreign language teaching content and curriculum of Applied-Oriented Universities need to align closely with industry needs, emphasizing career-oriented and practical teaching with student skill development as the core goal, and aligning with specific, actionable learning goals consistent with the OBE concept.

In practical exploration of the teaching model under the OBE concept, we initially establish the overarching goal of fostering students' practical language application abilities tailored to professional and societal requirements. This involves integrating Myanmar language teaching courses with students' professional skills and knowledge, particularly focusing on applied majors and career fields. Secondly, starting from the current academic situation, we assess students' overall characteristics and gather information on their final learning needs and interests through methods such as questionnaires, group discussions, or individual consultations. This helps us understand the goals students hope to achieve through learning Myanmar language, forming the basis for appropriate teaching objectives. Finally, based on students' varying levels, stages, and needs in Myanmar language learning, we can establish hierarchical teaching objectives for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. For instance, for students with differing proficiency levels in Myanmar language, objectives can be set proportionally, covering basics such as phonics and grammar, intermediate consolidation, and advanced progression.

4.2 Optimized Design of Teaching Content and Supplement of Teaching Materials

Teaching content and activities should be designed in reverse accordance with the teaching objectives to better serve the achievement of goals. Firstly, teaching content designed based on the OBE concept should be practical-oriented, focusing on the comprehensive development of students' language skills and cross-cultural communication abilities. This involves emphasizing the cultivation of students' ability to use Myanmar in actual communication scenarios, while integrating professional characteristics and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, increasing professional vocabulary and expressions, and providing diverse learning support, helps cultivate students' language skills and problem-solving abilities in practical application scenarios.

Secondly, the supplement and updating of Myanmar teaching materials should be strengthened to ensure that teaching material content aligns with actual application needs and integrates closely with professional knowledge. Supplementary materials, such as teacher handouts focusing on professional teaching content, can complement the core teaching materials. Furthermore, specific Myanmar

language teaching content tailored to the specialty majors of Applied-Oriented Universities should be integrated into the teaching materials. This content should be aligned with the characteristics and requirements of fields such as design and jewelry industries. For example, situational conversation content related to jewelry trading can focus on professional communication in daily life and work scenarios, encompassing common vocabulary, sentence patterns, and scene conversations. These enhancements aim to improve the professionalism and relevance of teaching content, providing more systematic, targeted, and professionally matched teaching resources.

4.3 Exploration of Diversified Teaching Methods

Teachers should utilize diversified teaching methods tailored to the type of “learning output”. By creating a rich educational environment based on the principles of learning science, teachers can mobilize students to actively participate in the teaching process, effectively achieving expected learning outputs rather than superficial outcomes. (Gu, Hu, Lin, et al., 2014) The comprehensive integration of multiple teaching methods can render the teaching process more flexible and diverse, ultimately enhancing students’ learning effectiveness.

4.3.1 Adjustment of Class Time Arrangements and Addition of Language Practice Content

As a compulsory public course, Myanmar language courses typically emphasize conceptual knowledge, with traditional teacher-centered teaching methods prevailing. In practical exploration, the emphasis is shifted towards increasing the proportion of students’ language practice. The 64-hour course is now divided into 32 hours of conceptual classes and 32 hours of language practice classes. The language practice sessions incorporate activities such as group discussions, cooperative learning, vocabulary games, and case analyses. Following these adjustments and comparisons, student participation in the classroom has significantly improved.

4.3.2 Expansion of Second Classroom Teaching Activities to Enhance Course Richness and Interest

Utilizing geographical advantages and the resources available at application-Applied-Oriented Universities, we aim to integrate industry and education through school-enterprise cooperation initiatives, thereby facilitating diverse second classroom practical activities. By engaging in industry-university cooperation projects, visiting the hometowns of overseas Chinese, and participating in two-way exchanges with overseas Chinese communities, students can immerse themselves in authentic language scenarios, thereby enhancing their proficiency in Myanmar language usage. This approach also fosters a stronger connection between language teaching content, professional knowledge in relevant fields, and real-world social demands. Moreover, it provides students with additional opportunities for language practice and supports their career development.

For instance, during the “Myanmar Second Classroom Development Activities Exchange Meeting” held in Heshun, a renowned hometown of overseas Chinese, students displayed remarkable enthusiasm. Following the event, they expressed that the activity not only heightened their interest in learning the Myanmar language but also deepened their understanding of Myanmar’s history.

4.3.3 Integration of Cultural Background and Organization of Various Cultural Activities to Increase Students' Interest in Learning the Myanmar Language

Students require not only language proficiency but also a deep understanding of Myanmar's history, culture, and traditions to enhance their appreciation and respect for Myanmar society and culture, thereby improving their cross-cultural communication skills. By organizing events such as the "Myanmar Food Festival" and the "Myanmar Water Splashing Festival," among other cultural activities, students exhibit strong interest and enthusiasm, yielding significant results.

4.3.4 Organizing Myanmar Language-Related Knowledge Competitions and Graded Examinations to Promote Teaching through Competitions and Learning through Certifications

Encouraging students to participate in Myanmar language examinations can effectively stimulate their interest in learning, enhance their motivation, and improve their language proficiency and application abilities. For instance, in the Yunnan Province Southeast Asian Language (Non-Common Language) Vocational Proficiency Examination, the passing rate of Myanmar language students in our college reached 100%.

In the teaching practice process based on the OBE concept, a variety of teaching methods and resources are integrated, emphasizing task-based teaching, practical instruction, and personalized learning support to enhance students' language proficiency and practical application skills. Regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms help continually refine the teaching process and enhance its effectiveness.

4.4 Reforming Teaching Evaluation Methods

To enhance teaching evaluation methods, it is essential to decrease the reliance on test scores and shift focus towards assessing students' process performance and overall achievements. Under the OBE concept, teaching evaluation centers on determining whether students have met the predefined learning objectives, rather than solely testing their memorization and comprehension abilities. Teachers must delineate clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria for Myanmar language courses, encompassing aspects of language proficiency, communicative skills, and intercultural understanding.

In reducing the weightage of summative evaluations in the overall score, emphasis should be placed on diversifying the process evaluation methods. Specific approaches include:

- 1) Group Discussion Activities: Evaluation outcomes comprise teacher assessments of group performance alongside peer evaluations and self-assessment feedback from students.
- 2) Written Practice Reports: Students submit reports based on activities conducted in the second classroom.
- 3) Cultural Activity Project Displays: Assessments are based on the presentation of projects related to cultural activities.
- 4) Oral Expression Tasks: Classroom activities such as Myanmar scenario dialogues and simulated professional internship sessions are employed to gauge students' oral proficiency.

Teachers should continuously assess and adapt teaching outcomes, adjusting strategies and content based on student feedback and learning progress. This approach ensures teaching remains flexible and

effective, continually optimizing the learning process to enhance student experience, effectiveness, and achievement. By prioritizing process evaluation, final grades can more accurately reflect students' comprehensive abilities post-adjustment.

5. Conclusion

After practical implementation and observation, students' performance and outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the Myanmar language teaching model under the OBE concept. The exploration of this model in Applied-Oriented Universities holds significant importance, as it has substantially enhanced students' abilities, motivation to learn, practical skills development, cross-cultural communication proficiency, and overall teaching quality. This teaching model closely aligns with the demands of society and students' individualized development, providing a strong foundation for their future career advancement and social responsibility. Moving forward, we intend to further deepen the application-oriented teaching model grounded in the OBE concept. We will continuously refine and enhance teaching content and methods based on industry requirements and the specific needs of our students.

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