

Original Paper

Research on Strategies to Improve the Effectiveness of English Classroom Teaching Discourse

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Abstract

With the continuous deepening of global education reform, English is an important tool for international communication, and its teaching quality has attracted much attention. Classroom teaching discourse plays a crucial role in English teaching. However, there are still many shortcomings in the current English classroom teaching discourse, such as lack of interactivity, insufficient inspiration, single expression and other problems, which seriously restrict the improvement of the quality of English teaching. In order to deeply analyze the effectiveness of English classroom teaching discourse, this article first defines its connotation, pointing out that the effectiveness of teaching discourse lies not only in the accuracy of language expression, but also in whether it can effectively stimulate students' thinking sparks, promote in-depth learning and understanding, and whether it can establish an inclusive and respectful atmosphere that focuses on cooperation. Subsequently, this article analyzes in detail the current situation of English classroom teaching discourse, points out the existing problems and their causes, and provides a basis for the subsequent improvement strategies. On this basis, this article puts forward a series of strategies to help English teachers optimize their classroom teaching discourse, ensuring that students can get positive and specific feedback in a timely manner, so as to adjust their learning strategies and make continuous progress.

Keywords

English class, teaching discourse effectiveness, improvement strategy

1. Introduction

English classroom teaching discourse is the language used by teachers and students in classroom interaction, and its effectiveness directly affects the teaching effect. In the current English teaching, how to improve the effectiveness of teaching discourse has become the focus of educators' attention. Effective teaching discourse can not only help students better understand knowledge, but also stimulate students'

interest in learning and participation, and promote the development of their language use ability. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to deeply explore the effectiveness of English classroom teaching discourse.

2. Literature Review

Classroom discourse refers to “a language used in classroom scenarios. Due to the special social roles of students and teachers in the classroom and their usual activities, the form and function of classroom discourse are different from those used in other scenarios” (Richards et al., 2000, pp. 64-65). Ellis (2012, p. 75) believes that “to some extent, ‘teaching’ is speech”. Classroom discourse highlights the cognition and belief of teachers, and shows the relationship and interaction between teachers and students. It is a highly condensed reproduction of “teaching” and “learning” in the classroom (Zhu, 2016).

3. Current Situation of Foreign Research

3.1 Theoretical Basis of Discourse Analysis

The study of classroom discourse in the field of foreign linguistics started earlier, and multi-dimensional discussion was carried out with discourse analysis theory as the core. For example, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) proposed a hierarchical model of classroom discourse analysis, which divides classroom discourse into sections, lessons, transactions, rounds, steps and behaviors, providing a framework for the systematic analysis of the discourse structure of classroom teaching. This model helps researchers to deeply analyze the organizational laws and interaction mechanisms of classroom discourse, and reveal the discourse role and conversion mode of teachers and students in classroom communication.

3.2 Research on the Characteristics and Functions of Teachers' Discourse

Many studies have focused on the characteristics and functions of teachers' discourse. The speed, vocabulary selection, syntactic complexity and other characteristics of teachers' discourse are considered to have an important impact on students' language understanding and acquisition. For example, Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis emphasizes the importance of teachers' discourse as an understandable input. Teachers should adjust the difficulty of speech according to the students' language level to promote students' language absorption. In addition, the functions of teachers' discourse in classroom management, knowledge transmission, emotional motivation and other aspects have also been discussed in depth. Teachers guide students to participate in classroom activities and organize teaching links through appropriate words. At the same time, they can also stimulate students' interest in learning and motivation to learn.

3.3 Interactive Speech Mode of Teachers and Students

Foreign scholars have conducted a lot of empirical research on the interactive discourse mode of teachers and students in English classes. The study found that there are differences in the interactive discourse patterns of teachers and students in the context of different teaching methods and classroom culture. For example, in student-centered classrooms, teacher-student interaction is more frequent, and students'

speech is more proactive; while in traditional lecture-oriented classrooms, teachers' discourse often dominates. The interaction hypothesis put forward by Long (1983) believes that the meaning negotiation process in teacher-student interaction is conducive to students' language acquisition. Through interactive correction, feedback and other links, students can better understand and master language knowledge.

4. Current Situation of Domestic Research

4.1 Research on the Connotation of the Effectiveness of Teaching Discourse

On the basis of drawing on foreign theories and combining with the actual situation of English teaching in China, domestic scholars have made an in-depth discussion on the connotation of the effectiveness of English classroom teaching discourse. It is generally believed that effective teaching discourse should have the characteristics of accuracy, clarity, conciseness, inspiration, etc., which can stimulate students' interest in learning, guide students to actively participate in classroom interaction, and promote students' development in knowledge, skills, emotions and other aspects.

4.2 Analysis of Influencing Factors

Domestic research has made a multi-faceted analysis of the factors affecting the effectiveness of English classroom teaching discourse. Teacher factors include teachers' language literacy, teaching philosophy, teaching experience, etc. Teachers with high language literacy can express the teaching content more accurately and fluently, and the student-centered teaching concept helps teachers adjust their discourse strategies and improve the effectiveness of their discourse. Student factors such as students' English level, learning motivation, learning style, etc. will also affect their understanding and response to the teacher's speech. In addition, the classroom environment, textbook content, teaching methods, etc. are also important influencing factors.

4.3 Improve Strategy Exploration

Domestic scholars have put forward a series of strategies on how to improve the effectiveness of English classroom teaching. In terms of discourse design, teachers should carefully design questions, feedback, explanations and other discourse links to improve the quality of discourse. For example, design a variety of question types, including open-ended questions, critical questions, etc., to stimulate students' thinking. In terms of classroom interaction, we advocate the establishment of an equal and harmonious teacher-student relationship, encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions and speeches, and increase the volume of students' speech. At the same time, teachers should pay attention to the emotionality of speech, use positive emotional language to create a good classroom atmosphere, and improve students' enthusiasm.

5. Analysis of the Current Situation of English Classroom Teachers' Discourse

Classroom teachers' discourse mainly includes: (1) the teacher's discourse volume; (2) teachers' discourse adjustment characteristics, especially in vocabulary and grammar; (3) teachers' questions, including the number and methods of teachers' classroom questions; (4) feedback methods (Bao, 2008).

5.1 Imbalance in Speech Volume

Some English teachers occupy a dominant position in the classroom. They talk too much, and students have relatively few opportunities to participate in expression. This situation causes students to be in a state of passive acceptance of knowledge and lack of space for active thinking and language practice, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' language ability. For example, in some grammar explanation classes, teachers may explain for a long time continuously, and students can only listen and record, and rarely have the opportunity to use the grammar they have learned to express themselves orally or in writing.

5.2 Single Way of Asking Questions

According to the expected answer content of the question, classroom questions can be divided into two types: limited-answer questions and non-limited-answer questions (Chen, 2015). Teachers' questions are often based on low-level knowledge-based questions, that is, limited-answer questions, such as asking about the interpretation of words, text details, etc. Although such questions can test students' mastery of basic knowledge, they lack in-depth exploration of students' thinking ability. High-level thinking questions, that is, non-limited questions, such as analysis, evaluation and innovation questions, are not conducive to stimulating students' critical thinking and innovation ability. For example, in the reading class, teachers usually ask questions about the characters in the article, the time of the event and other details, and rarely guide students to discuss the theme, writing techniques or social significance of the article in depth.

5.3 Discourse Feedback Lacks Targeting

Some teachers do not evaluate whether the students' answers are right or wrong, and immediately ask the second question for the students to answer; or the evaluation is vague, so that the students are like falling clouds and can't figure it out; or only talk about the shortcomings, not the advantages, which hurts the students' enthusiasm; or tell the students the correct answer too early to replace the students' thinking (Wang, 2002). This makes it difficult for students to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and cannot clarify the direction of improvement, which affects students' learning enthusiasm and learning effect. For example, when a student answers a question, the teacher may simply say "right" or "wrong" without further pointing out the reason why the student answered right or wrong, nor giving constructive advice.

6. The Connotation and Importance of the Effectiveness of Speech in English Classroom Teaching

6.1 Connotation

The validity requirement is a pragmatic norm created by the German postmodern philosopher Habermas. This norm generalizes the category of "validity" only as a statement of facts or to ensure the normative social field (Liu, 2012). It believes that the condition for society to be possible is the orderly development and integration of many actors under the regulation of the shared behavior coordination mechanism (Pang, 2023). The effectiveness of teaching discourse means that the language used by teachers in the classroom

can accurately and clearly convey teaching information, which is in line with students' cognitive level and language acceptance ability, can stimulate students' learning interest and thinking activities, promote students' active participation in classroom interaction, and finally achieve teaching goals, helping students effectively Master knowledge and skills, and improve the comprehensive use of language.

6.2 Importance

Effective teaching discourse helps to create a positive classroom atmosphere and enhance students' learning motivation. Teachers can attract students' attention through vivid, interesting and inspiring words and make them more willing to devote themselves to classroom learning. At the same time, reasonable discourse guidance can help students build a knowledge system and improve learning efficiency. In the process of language learning, students need to improve their language ability through a large number of language inputs and outputs. Effective teaching discourse can provide students with high-quality language input and guide students to carry out effective language output, thus promoting the development of students' language acquisition and language application ability.

7. Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of English Classroom Teaching Discourse

7.1 Optimize the Teacher'S Speech Volume and Speed

Teachers should reasonably control the volume of speech according to the teaching content and the actual situation of students, avoid excessive explanation, and give students enough opportunities to express themselves. Flexibly adjust the allocation of speech volume in different links such as classroom introduction, knowledge explanation, practice guidance, etc. For example, in the introduction link, you can lead out the theme through concise and clear words, or use rich and diverse videos, audio and other resources on the Internet to help the successful introduction of classroom topics, which can not only improve teaching efficiency but also stimulate students' interest; in the practice link, let students do more practical operations, and teachers carry out Necessary inspection and guidance to reduce lengthy explanations. At the same time, teachers should pay attention to the control of speech speed and teach at a moderate speed to ensure that students can keep up with the teaching rhythm and understand the teaching content. For students in lower grades or with low English proficiency, the speed of speech should be appropriately slowed down; as students' English level improves, the speed of speech can be gradually adjusted, but it should still be clear and easy to understand.

7.2 Diversified Questioning Skills

7.2.1 Design Diversified Problem Types

Design diversified problem types, including knowledge-based, understanding-based, application-based, analytical-based, evaluation-based and innovative questions. Knowledge-based questions help students consolidate basic knowledge, such as "What does the word 'example' mean?"; Understanding questions check students' understanding of the text or knowledge points, such as "Can you explain the main idea of this paragraph?"; Applied questions allow students to use the knowledge they have learned to solve practical problems, such as "How can we use the grammar structure we learned to write a sentence?";

Analytical questions guide students to analyze texts or phenomena in depth, such as “Why do you think the author wrote this passage in this way?”; Evaluation questions cultivate students’ critical thinking, such as “Do you agree with the author’s opinion? Why or why not?”; Innovative questions encourage students to use their imagination and creativity, such as “If you were the main character, what would you do differently?” In the process of asking questions, pay attention to the level and order of questions, start with simple questions, gradually guide students to think deeply, and improve students’ thinking ability.

7.2.2 Pay Attention to Students’ “Questions”

The new curriculum reform emphasizes the subjective position of students in learning. The realization of the effectiveness of questions in junior high school English classes also needs to pay attention to students’ “questions” and better highlight the subjective status of students. First of all, set up a scene to stimulate students’ awareness of “questioning”. In daily teaching, English teachers need to set up some novel and unique problem scenarios appropriately according to the teaching content and requirements to stimulate the awareness of actively “asking questions”. Secondly, group interaction promotes students’ “good questions”. In junior high school English teaching, teachers should leave enough opportunities for students to arrange for group discussion and interaction. For the questions given by students, teachers should give certain recognition and praise to improve their awareness of “good questions”. Secondly, the simulation experience encourages students to have the courage to “ask questions”. Junior high school students learn English not just to cope with the exam. It is more important to learn to use it in real life (Liu, 2021).

7.3 Enhance the Effectiveness of Speech Feedback

Teachers should be clear about their preferences and habits of using feedback speech. Listening or translating through recording is the most effective way to help teachers understand their classroom discourse and improve classroom behavior (Cullen, 2001), and it is also helpful for colleagues to listen to each other in a targeted manner. Teachers should learn to use different feedback strategies to create output opportunities for students and avoid using single and repetitive feedback. In addition, they should increase speech feedback based on students’ emotional attitudes and integrating personal views. Teachers should give timely, specific and targeted feedback on students’ answers. When students answer correctly, in addition to giving affirmation, they can also further ask questions to guide students to think deeply and expand the depth of thinking, such as “That’s correct. Can you give another example to support your answer?” When students answer wrongly, teachers should point out the mistakes in an encouraging way, help students analyze the reasons, and guide students to find the correct answer, such as “That’s a good try, but there is a small mistake. Can you think about it again? Maybe you missed something important in the text.” At the same time, teachers’ feedback language should be rich and diverse, avoiding a single evaluation method, so that students can feel the teachers’ concern and respect for them, and enhance students’ self-confidence in learning.

7.4 Use Body Language and Secondary Language

Non-verbal communication research has a long history and continuous vitality. The formation of the concept of nonverbal behavior (NVB) can even be traced back to the eloquent of ancient Rome. The Mehrabian model, which is widely used in the field of organizational management, believes that in interpersonal communication, the communication related to language words and sentences only accounts for 7% of the communication content, and the phonetic intonation information such as paralanguage expresses 38% of the content and intention, and the rest 55% are expressed through facial expressions, gestures, postures and other body language (Mehrabian & Ferries, 1967). Body language and secondary language play an important auxiliary role in teaching discourse. Teachers can enhance the expressiveness and infectiousness of teaching discourse through facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body posture and other body language. For example, when explaining vivid and interesting stories, teachers can use rich facial expressions and exaggerated gestures to attract students' attention and make the story more vivid; when interacting with students, use eye contact to express concern and encouragement, so that students can feel the importance of teachers. Secondary languages such as intonation, tone, pauses, etc. can also convey different emotions and meanings. When emphasizing the key content, teachers can improve the intonation and increase the tone; when asking questions, make appropriate pauses to give students time to think. Reasonable use of body language and secondary language can make the teaching discourse more vivid and rich, and improve students' interest and participation in learning.

7.5 Create a Real Context

Teachers should create a real language communication context in the classroom as much as possible, so that students can use English to communicate in actual situations. It can be achieved through role-playing, group discussion, scenario simulation and other activities. For example, in the business English course, business negotiations, business meetings and other scenarios are created to let students play different roles and carry out business English communication and negotiation; in daily life English teaching, supermarket shopping, restaurant ordering, travel and other scenarios are simulated, so that students can exercise their English listening and speaking skills in familiar situations. The creation of real context can make students feel the practicality of English, improve students' language use ability and communication ability, and also enhance students' learning motivation and interest. In addition, electronic courseware is a discourse element in the language classroom, a symbolic framework, including text, pictures, music, video and other genres (Huang, 2007). Teachers' application of electronic courseware in classroom teaching discourse also helps to create real situations.

8. Conclusion

The effectiveness of English classroom teaching discourse has a crucial impact on the quality of English teaching and the effect of students' language learning. Through the analysis of the current situation of English classroom discourse, we realize the existing problems and shortcomings. Strategies to improve the effectiveness of teaching discourse include optimizing the volume and speed of teachers' speech,

diversifying questioning skills, enhancing the effectiveness of discourse feedback, using body language and sub-language, and creating real contexts. English teachers should constantly improve their teaching and discourse ability, pay attention to students' needs and reactions, flexibly use various strategies, create a positive and active classroom atmosphere, and promote students' language acquisition and comprehensive development, so as to improve the overall quality of English classroom teaching, lay a solid foundation for students' English learning, and help them better use English to communicate in their future study, work and life.

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