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Original Paper

Unit Teaching Design for English Interpretation Course Based on POA with the Assistance of a Virtual Reality Interpretation Training System

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Abstract

This study introduces the application of virtual reality technology in English interpretation course, as well as the unit teaching design for the course based on the POA. The study first reviews the development history of virtual reality technology and highlights its significant role in driving structural changes in language teaching. Then, this study analyzes the problems existing in current English interpretation course, such as the lack of timeliness in teaching materials, monotonous teaching methods, and single evaluation methods. To address these issues, this study constructs a POA-based unit teaching design for the English Interpretation Course with the assistance of a virtual reality interpretation system.

Keywords

Virtual Reality Technology, POA, English Interpretation Course, Unit Teaching Design

1. Introduction

The concept of “Virtual Reality” was introduced by Myron Kruger in 1973 and gradually gained widespread recognition and adoption in the 1980s. Virtual Reality (VR) technology enables users to achieve simulated interactions with the virtual world through experience and perception. In the context of the information era, cutting-edge technologies led by VR are driving structural changes in language teaching, making the transition from traditional classrooms to smart classrooms in universities an inevitable trend. The Ministry of Education of China has clearly stated that universities should promote the deep integration of information technology with experimental teaching, closely align with the needs of economic and social development for talent cultivation in universities, closely integrate with the

latest achievements in professional characteristics and industry development, and adopt modern information technology to develop VR experimental teaching projects with accurate principles and appropriate difficulty. In April 2021, Wu Yan, Director of the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, pointed out that universities should promote the deep integration of information technology with curriculum teaching, introduce the latest breakthroughs in scientific and technological fields such as VR into classroom teaching, and deepen the integration of production, teaching, and research through VR experimental teaching, thereby achieving a high degree of matching between the supply of talent cultivation and the demand of industrial development.

The Production Oriented Approach (POA), a foreign language teaching theory with Chinese characteristics, advocates the principles of learning-centeredness, integration of learning and application, and holistic education. (Wen, 2008) It aims to effectively address the issue of separation between learning and application in foreign language teaching, striving to achieve optimal teaching outcomes and realize the goals of learning for application and achieving success through learning, which align perfectly with the teaching objectives of English interpretation course. Exploring new pathways for integrating information technology into interpretation teaching is an important trend in the reform of interpretation teaching.

This study attempts to design a POA-based teaching design for the English Interpretation course with the assistance of a virtual reality interpretation training system. The aim is to improve the effectiveness of course teaching and the quality of talent cultivation, and also to provide a reference for the reform of such courses.

2. Current Situation of English Interpretation Teaching

Through years of teaching English interpretation, the author has identified the following issues in current interpretation teaching:

2.1 Teaching Materials

English interpretation textbooks in higher education lack practicality, cross-cultural relevance, and current political content. The themes, skills, knowledge, and culture related to interpretation teaching are not integrated. There is a scarcity of three-dimensional, multimodal textbooks that integrate online learning resources such as audio, video, and micro-lectures.

2.2 Teaching Methods

The teaching method is the traditional one-to-many classroom model, which is relatively monotonous, dull, and lacks interactivity. Teachers act as knowledge transmitters, while students are passive learners. The lack of learner-centered teaching methods makes it difficult for learners to convert learned interpretation knowledge into interpretation skills.

2.3 Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods rely solely on final exams, a form of summative evaluation, lacking formative evaluation. This makes it challenging to stimulate learners' enthusiasm and self-confidence in learning.

To address the above issues, this study aims to develop a POA-based teaching design for the English Interpretation course with the assistance of a virtual reality interpretation training system. This design aims to optimize teaching effectiveness, enhance the quality of talent cultivation, and hopefully provide useful references and inspirations for the reform and innovation of similar courses.

3. Unit Teaching Design of English Interpretation Course Based on POA with the Assistance of a Virtual Reality Interpretation Training System

Based on an analysis of students' learning situations, the author conducted a semester of teaching practice using POA with the assistance of a virtual reality system and extracted the following teaching design for a unit.

3.1 Integration of Industry and University to Jointly Formulate Competency Goals and Task Chains

To address the issues of interpretation teaching being disconnected from real-life scenarios and students lacking internal motivation, teachers need to deeply understand the industrial environment and demands. They should create scenarios for interpretation tasks that may occur now or in the future, clarifying the topics, purposes, identities, and occasions of the driving tasks (Wen & Sun, 2020), in order to reflect the socio-cultural context of interpretation teaching. Considering the informational value and communicative functions of interpretation tasks, interpreters are both information conveyors and employers of translation activities, possessing communicative abilities such as explaining, receiving guests, and negotiating. Teachers and industry experts should construct competency chains from both pragmatic and communicative competencies. Pragmatic competencies are formulated by teachers, while industry experts primarily formulate competency goal chains from non-verbal dimensions. Subsequently, teachers design task chains to prompt students to acquire corresponding competencies.

3.2 Three-Level Facilitating Activities of "Trial and Error—Multimodal Compensation —Reconstruction"

To address the issue of language-centric interpretation teaching lacking in communicative aspects, the facilitating stage starts with the three evaluation indicators of "effectiveness of facilitating activities" (Wen, 2017) and their implementation pathways (Qiu, 2017). Combining the theory of trial and error with constructivism, this study designs a three-level facilitating activity of "trial and error-multimodal compensation-reconstruction" from the perspectives of language, structure, content, and communication. The "trial and error" activities gradually form a "stimulus-response" connection. The cognitive process of humans is the continuous development of various connections. "Trial and error" targets the promotion of the "accuracy" indicator by specifying the "difficulties" in "addressing production difficulties" as "errors," making the facilitating measures more precise. "Trial and error" is the first step of facilitation. Unlike POA, which focuses on facilitating gaps generated by driving tasks, this design particularly emphasizes students' "trial and error" after being driven, converting "perceived gaps" into "attempted errors." A significant increase in awareness of error information can lead to a

deeper “reflection” on correct information, forming strong connections. The second step of facilitation is “multimodal compensation.” Teachers add, delete, modify, and adjust the textbook content, supplementing multimodal materials to compensate for students’ mistakes in language, structure, content, and communication. The third step is “reconstruction.” Constructivist theory (Jonassen, 1991) views learning as an individual’s process of constructing their own knowledge and understanding, with knowledge being the result of internalization through individual-society interactions. Students need to “reconstruct” what they have learned in the virtual reality system to master systematic disciplinary knowledge. The three-level facilitating activities of “trial and error-multimodal compensation-reconstruction” draw on cognitive target classification, gradually increasing in cognitive processing and task difficulty. This design aims to complete interpretation tasks in the virtual reality system as the ultimate goal, enabling students to master systematic disciplinary knowledge, accomplish communicative tasks, and achieve the transformation from “language competence” to “pragmatic competence” and “communicative competence” through the three-level facilitating activities.

3.3 Hybrid Evaluation Model of “Industry-University Integration”

The evaluation stage introduces industry experts, combining teacher-student collaborative assessment (TSCA) (Wen, 2016) and a mobile learning platform to create an online and offline “industry-university integration” evaluation model. In the virtual reality system, teachers and industry experts jointly develop evaluation criteria based on academic and communicative abilities, determining evaluation foci and typical samples based on common student issues. Teachers and students jointly evaluate the typical samples according to the evaluation foci, with teachers setting diverse interpretation tasks in the virtual reality system to lead students in consolidating key points. Students revise their work and submit it in the system. Teachers and industry experts then re-evaluate the students’ work online, adjusting the evaluation criteria and focuses based on new issues.

4. Conclusion

This study constructs a unit teaching design for English interpretation courses based on POA with the assistance of a virtual reality system. The virtual reality interpretation training system is an inevitable outcome of cooperation and innovation in production, teaching, and research in the context of informatization. This attempt represents a reform and exploration of traditional interpretation teaching concepts, models, methods, and evaluations, providing a reference for other institutions to engage in production-teaching-research cooperation and educational reform. It promotes the construction of distinctive interpretation talent training models tailored to local conditions among various institutions, lays a solid practical foundation for the deep integration of advanced technologies such as virtual reality with interpretation courses, facilitates comprehensive and multidimensional deep cooperation in production, teaching, and research in the new era, and will help supply the market with more applied interpretation talents with solid basic skills and excellent professional qualities. Based on POA, the ability target setting and task chain design of “industry - University integration,” the three-level

facilitating activities of “trial and error-multimodal compensation-reconstruction,” and the hybrid evaluation model of “industry-university integration” can enhance students’ intrinsic motivation, pragmatic competence, and productive abilities. In the future, research can focus on building an English interpretation teaching and research community to achieve cross-border integration among industry experts, English teachers, and interpretation specialists, compiling English interpretation textbooks, and cultivating students' academic and communicative abilities.

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