

Research on the Application of PAD Class in the Second Foreign Language (Japanese) Course

Yan Li, Xianjiu Liao*

Youjiang Medical University for Nationalities, Baise, China

Email: *lxj2006910@163.com

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Abstract

The “PAD class” is a new teaching model put forward by Professor Zhang Xuexin of Fudan University based on Chinese local culture, which can be divided into “PAD across different classes” and “PAD in one class” according to the allocation of time (Chen, 2016). Based on the analysis of the learning situation and teaching objectives of the teaching group, this paper adopts the “PAD in one class”, and tries to explain the implementation of presentation, assimilation, and discussion in it, as well as the principle and mechanism for students to gain from learning, hoping to provide some reference for teachers who choose the “PAD class”.

Keywords

PAD Class, PAD in One Class, Research on Teaching Practice

1. Preface

The “PAD class” is a new teaching model originally put forward by Professor Zhang Xuexin from the Department of Psychology of Fudan University based on classroom teaching practice as well as students’ cognitive and psychological laws in learning, which clearly divides teaching time into three parts: presentation, assimilation, and discussion. It gives full play to the essence and advantages of traditional classes and discussion-based classes. In the continuous practice of front-line teachers, the “PAD across different classes” and the “PAD in one class” are put forward in light of different disciplines, courses, and learning contents, the difference of which lies in the time arrangement. The “PAD across different classes” refers to presentation first and discussion after a week, providing students with enough time to assimilate knowledge independently after class, and to prepare for discussion and sharing. The “PAD in one class” refers to the

completion of three complete teaching activities, namely presentation, assimilation, and discussion in a continuous period. This study mainly discusses the implementation of the “PAD in one class”, and further explores the principle and mechanism for students to acquire knowledge in this teaching process.

2. Analysis of the Learning Situation in Classes with “PAD in One Class”

The teaching objects of this study are English majors in ethnic universities located in underdeveloped and remote areas, who choose Japanese as a second foreign language. They have nearly no foundation in Japanese, and less contact with the Japanese language and culture, but these students are strongly interested in Japanese courses with full expectations. These English majors, most of whom are adjusted to learn English, have weak English foundations, so most of them have to spend much time and energy on English learning in their spare time. In the second foreign language (Japanese) course, considering the actual situation of the students, the “PAD in one class” is mainly adopted in the introduction of the teaching model of “PAD class”, hoping that this new teaching model can help students build a complete knowledge structure to realize deep learning.

3. Teaching Objectives of the “PAD in One Class”

The teaching objectives of the second foreign language (Japanese) course are determined as follows based on the learning situation analysis: first, master the basic knowledge of the Japanese language, including the memory of vocabulary, the understanding and application of grammar, and form correct thinking habits of the Japanese language; second, cultivate and maintain an interest in Japanese learning, lay a solid foundation for postgraduate entrance examination, overseas studying and jobs in foreign trade and foreign companies, and establish the concept of “lifelong learning”; third, expand cultural knowledge to enlighten the minds and grow healthily in cultural implication; fourth, strengthen patriotism through a further understanding of the cultural knowledge of China and Japan.

The teaching objectives of this course correspond to the RUAC ability development goals, including reproduction, understanding, application and creation put forward in the PAD class (Zhao & Zhang, 2018). The first and second teaching objectives embody the reproduction and understanding of basic linguistic knowledge of the Japanese language, the formation of a certain cognitive structure, and the grasp of the internal value and significance of the learning materials; the third teaching objective reflects the application of knowledge. The basic knowledge of the Japanese language can be flexibly applied to face new situations in life, solve new problems and develop new abilities; and the fourth teaching objective embodies the creation of knowledge. Stronger and more meaningful value is created in knowledge on the basis of reproduction, understanding and application to promote individual mental development.

4. The Implementation of the “PAD in One Class”

How can we achieve the teaching objectives in the practical teaching of the second foreign language (Japanese) course? How can we help students study in a complete and profound way? The following is an example of vocabulary and grammar learning in the first class of Unit 1 of the *New Edition of the Standard Japanese Language for Sino-Japanese Exchanges (Elementary Course 1)*, with 3 class hours that lasts for 120 minutes. It is expounded from three parts: presentation, assimilation and discussion.

4.1. Presentation Part of the “PAD in One Class”

In this Japanese class, students are first exposed to Japanese vocabulary, grammar and sentence expression after learning the Japanese syllabary. The presentation part fully embraces the advantages of teachers' guidance and professional ability in traditional classes (Zhang, 2014), and helps students to build their knowledge systems efficiently. In the presentation part, teachers focus on explaining Japanese grammatical rules to support students in the construction of the linguistic features and logical thinking of the Japanese language, and summarize the sentence patterns of affirmative sentences, negative sentences and interrogative sentences in Japanese noun sentences. As a result, teachers' explanation helps students build a general framework for learning, encourages students to learn completely and efficiently, and reflects the guiding and inspiring role of teachers. The teaching objectives are realized in mastering the Japanese grammar and laying a good foundation for “lifelong learning”.

4.2. Assimilation Part of the “PAD in One Class”

Through the teachers' presentation, students have a clear understanding of the required grammar and sentence patterns in this class. Then how can we apply the grammar and sentence patterns flexibly and comprehensively to specific contexts? Therefore, the important task of assimilation is vocabulary understanding and memory.

Here is the preparation for assimilation. The first step is to divide students into groups, with 3 or 4 members in one group. Then, the App called the *New Edition of the Standard Japanese Language for Sino-Japanese Exchanges (E-book)* is downloaded into their mobile phones, where standard audio files are provided for students to learn.

4.2.1. Students' Learning Views in Assimilation

Having just finished learning the Japanese syllabary, the students are not proficient in kana. In each group, the students have an opportunity to encourage and learn from each other in learning different kana and words. Thus, they can enjoy presenting themselves and contribute their individual knowledge and wisdom in the knowledge processing, reorganization and construction. Besides, a symbiotic, shared and coexisting learning environment is created. This method not only allows students to decide on their learning time, but also fully stimulates stu-

dents' learning abilities such as active conversations and communication, understanding and exploration, as well as experience and reflection. Dewey, a famous American educator, once said: book knowledge is unteachable and cannot be taught directly, because students' assimilation of knowledge is complex, including the processes of "restoration and sinking, experience and inquiry, reflection and floating". Professor Guo Yuanxiang summarizes these processes as the "U-shaped learning" (Guo, 2017). For Japanese vocabulary learning, restoration and sinking is the "self-processing" of knowledge itself, which is the most complex, profound and valuable. The restoration and sinking of knowledge is the lowest part of the "U-shaped learning", providing a solid foundation for experience and exploration, reflection and floating. Only by deeply understanding and interpreting the knowledge itself can students deepen learning and make exploration and reflection spontaneously, thus obtaining the added value of knowledge in its significance and realizing self-growth.

In the traditional class teaching model, vocabulary learning is usually led by teachers who read first with students repeating, which ignores the complex learning process of "self-construction and self-processing" of students. Consequently, the new knowledge is impossible to form an extensive and deep correlation with individual knowledge and experience, thus leading to a failure in understanding new knowledge.

4.2.2. Teachers' Teaching Concept in Assimilation

In the learning stage of assimilation in groups, with the help of the standard audio of the *New Edition of the Standard Japanese Language for Sino-Japanese Exchanges (E-book)*, teachers participate in group learning as a supervisor and Q&A provider. In this part, teachers have enough time to give consideration to every group, even every student, which is impossible in traditional classes. Teachers can monitor every student's pronunciation at any time and correct any inaccurate pronunciation if necessary. They can also affirm and praise those who are positive and motivated, and are ready to answer students' questions. The "de-authoritative" communication activities of teachers (Li & Tian, 2019) regulate the rhythm and development process of learning activities, improve students' participation and activeness in learning, and expand individual and collective thoughts and opinions, so that joint development of learning resources is realized to enhance students' sense of learning acquisition.

After students' learning in the assimilation part, the teaching objective is achieved, that is, to master the pronunciation, forms and meaning of Japanese vocabulary and to lay a solid foundation for flexible application.

4.3. Discussion Part of the "PAD in One Class"

As for the discussion, each discipline has its own unique style and characteristics when using PAD class. For zero-based Japanese learners, the initial discussion concentrates on answering questions about the learning puzzle, expanding relevant cultural knowledge, and sharing of their learning conditions.

First of all, teachers summarize and explain the common puzzle of the students in the learning process. Secondly, the words that can be related to cultural knowledge should be detailed and vividly explained. For example, in learning vocabulary in the first class, the cultural knowledge can be supplemented, such as the origin of Japanese surnames, the greeting etiquette of Japanese people, and the history and culture of the University of Tokyo. That is how to introduce cultural knowledge and influence students. Besides, the comparison of Chinese and Japanese cultures can also serve as a supplement. These supplements can deepen students' understanding of Japanese vocabulary, enrich their learning contents, expand their cultural literacy, and cultivate their interest in Japanese learning. Moreover, the Chinese culture can be highlighted to stimulate and strengthen patriotism. Scheffler, an American curriculum theorist, points out in the book *Conditions of Knowledge*: knowledge has belief condition, evidence condition and truth condition (Guo, 2017), which are also key essential conditions for knowledge understanding. An in-depth cultural analysis of symbolic knowledge can be made to convey cultural thoughts, spirit, value and thinking models to students. The cultural background knowledge can support students' stronger beliefs of knowledge and evidence, thus creating conditions and foundation for the consequent flexible application.

Students need to combine words and grammar to form sentences suitable for specific contexts after understanding the vocabulary and grammar. In order to activate students' potential and wisdom, group competition is adopted to allow them to speak out in sentences they want to express or they can express. As a result, book knowledge is transformed into personal knowledge to realize the profound influence of knowledge.

5. Conclusion

The model of the "PAD in one class" adapts to students' actual situations, conforms to students' learning patterns, and provides a complete and profound teaching environment and philosophy. Furthermore, students' internal learning motivation is inspired so that they can spontaneously construct their own unique "clusters of knowledge and logic structures" (Li & Tian, 2019). Through presentation, assimilation, and discussion, the PAD in one class can build a multi-dimensional and high-input learning environment for students, where students are internally motivated to learn for self-growth and self-improvement. The deficiency of this study, however, lies in less reflection of the students' learning outcomes. Therefore, further research will be conducted to explore the changes in students' learning under the teaching model of the "PAD in one class" through interviews and questionnaires among students.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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