Research on the Teaching and Learning Strategies in College English Reading Curriculum from the Perspective of Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

Based on Theory of Second Language Acquisition, this paper analyzes the teaching and learning strategies in college English reading curriculum from the perspective of acquisition and learning hypothesis, monitoring hypothesis, input hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis.

Subject Areas

Language Education

Keywords

College English Reading Curriculum, Theory of Second Language Acquisition, Teaching Strategies, Learning Strategies

1. Introduction

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition consists of five hypotheses: the acquisition and learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitoring hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis [1]. Among them, the acquisition and learning hypothesis, the monitoring hypothesis and the input hypothesis theory are interchangeable and complementary to the teaching and learning strategies of the university English reading class.

Krashen's acquisition and learning hypothesis emphasizes that "learning" does not become "acquisition". The process of "acquisition" is informal and takes place in natural contexts, marked by unconsciousness or weak or subconsciousness, and does not follow explicit rules or correct errors; the process of

"learning" is formal and takes place in a teaching context, which is marked by consciousness or strong awareness, and learns according to explicit rules, requiring error correction [2]. Learners' fluency in a second or foreign language is the result of "acquisition" rather than "learning", and the acquisition of English requires immersion in a second language environment or exposure to authentic language materials. Wu Ding'e, a Chinese scholar, argues that in the whole process of second language learning, if there are two pathways, acquisition and learning, they are also intertwined, integrated and inseparable [3].

Krashen's monitoring hypothesis suggests that language acquisition and language learning play different roles in the development of second language skills in adults. Under normal circumstances, only language acquisition allows us to "begin" to express ourselves in a second language and to become fluent in oral communication, whereas language learning has only one function—to "monitor" or edit the use of language rules. This monitoring can occur before or after writing or speaking. Krashen classifies three types of monitoring users. The first is over-monitors, the second is the under-monitors, and the third is ideal monitors. The goal of teaching is to develop ideal monitors. They use monitoring appropriately without interfering with communication, but try to modify it in their writing or prepared speech to improve the accuracy of their speech and writing. The ideal monitors are able to use learned skills to compensate for acquired skills [4].

Krashen's input hypothesis suggests that acquisition can only occur when the learner is exposed to "comprehensible language input", *i.e.*, second language input that is slightly above his or her current language level, and when he or she is able to focus on understanding the meaning or message rather than on understanding the form. According to Krashen, the ideal input should have four characteristics: comprehensibility, be both interesting and relevant, be non-grammatically programmed, and have sufficient input [5].

The affective filter hypothesis views learners' motivation, attitudes, anxiety, and other emotional factors as adjustable filters, and the "affective filter" is an internal processing system that subconsciously prevents learners from absorbing language by what psychologists call "emotions". It is a psychological barrier that prevents the learner from fully digesting the integrated input he or she receives. Emotional factors can either block or facilitate input to the language acquisition organs of the brain, *i.e.*, a high affective filter can limit second language acquisition, while a low affective filter can facilitate second language acquisition [6].

Generally speaking, learning and acquisition are coordinated and complementary in the teaching practice of English reading courses in Chinese universities. Learning is dominant, while the time and quality of acquisition need to be improved.

2. Teaching Strategies

2.1. Attention Strategy

Before class, teachers adopt content schema and language schema to introduce

topics of interest to students (topics that respond to students' interests in reading, have clear directions and objectives, and are highly relevant to the reading of the text) or create problem situations (close to students' psychology of seeking new and different things, with "new" to attract interest and "strange" to stimulate interest). The questions are designed to activate students' cultural background knowledge, stimulate cognitive-psychological "conflict", and to start reading, communicating and investigating with the questions in mind, clearing language barriers, expanding reading horizons, exploring the content of the text, gaining a deeper understanding of the text, and developing reading cognition, which eventually will enable them to achieve their reading goals. For example, before reading the article Einstein and What Music Did for His Genius, [7] teacher releases music-related video materials and asks the question: Is there any piece of music that makes you feel connected? What is the connection between music and your life? By doing so, a topic of general interest is introduced and students are inspired to share their knowledge of music. Teacher helps students to build background knowledge in a flexible way, such as setting up matching and true/false questions about Einstein and types of music, music instruments, etc. Students are encouraged to complete the knowledge competition in groups, so that they can easily acquire background knowledge, paving the way and clearing the main language barriers in the following text analysis. The question "Do you think Einstein was stupid?" stimulates students' cognitive-psychological "conflict" and arouses their interest in reading. The question "Why did the teacher say that Einstein was too stupid to learn?" will lead students to a deeper reading of the text in the process of exploring the content, thus deepening their understanding of the theme.

2.2. Planning Strategy

Teachers set realistic short-, medium- and long-term English reading goals. Students plan their reading time according to their current level and ability (knowledge of syntax, chapter structure, reading strategies, background knowledge, etc.), and make short-, medium- and long-term reading plans and concrete implementation schedules. Students report regularly on the completion of their plans and teachers provide guidance and assistance. Teachers take a particular reading text theme as the basis, combine their own knowledge system and reading text materials on the same or similar themes, link multi-modal discourse resources, perceive and experience, confirm and falsify, explore and extract core literacy information from the text, process and integrate and output expressions, explore the thematic meaning of the text, and enhance the value of education.

2.3. Grouping Strategy

Based on students' reading levels, teachers adopt homogeneous or heterogeneous groupings at different teaching stages according to students' reading interests, gender and personality. Cooperative groups consist of operators and

checkers of extra-curricular reading, who work together to find and read relevant materials, achieve communication and interaction through activities such as book reports, post-reading reflections and oral communication, and discuss and monitor and check each other. The checkers check for gaps and make reasonable comments and pertinent suggestions on the oral reports to facilitate the reading learning of the operators. Teachers supervise, check and guide students during group activities in a timely manner to enhance the planning and effectiveness of reading outside the classroom. For example, after reading the article Einstein and What Music Did for His Genius, teacher groups students according to their different choices of idol views and asks them to cooperate in groups to consult reading materials and summarize them in the form of a report in class, and further debate and explore among the groups on the concept of choosing an idol.

2.4. Questioning Strategy

Teachers should be ready to ask questions during the reading process, taking into account the facts of the text and digging into the topic. This will stimulate university students' curiosity and imagination, and develop thinking skills such as intuition, epiphany and inspiration, as well as the spirit of discursive innovation such as seeking newness, change, doubt, criticism and reflection. For example, when we read "When we say genius, one name will come to a lot of people's mind", teacher guides students to discuss: What is genius? What makes genius? Through reading the text and exploring the topic, students can realize that it is not talent but hard work that makes a genius, and they are inspired them to face life with a positive attitude. When analyzing the sentence "His picture with his distinctive hairstyle even became a pop culture icon", teacher encourages students to debate in teams on the basis of reviewing the meaning of the word "icon" in different contexts. In your eyes, who is the pop culture icon? Einstein or Xiaozhan (the idol of many young people in China recently)? In this way, students explore what kind of idols the younger generation needs in the new era. Students will be guided to reflect on their own view of choosing an idol, to take the responsibility of inheriting traditional Chinese culture, and to establish a correct view of idols.

2.5. Multi-Modal Strategy

Teachers use voice intonation, pictures, audio and video, body language, music and other forms of modality to carry out reading teaching during the introduction of topics, conceptual and theoretical explanations, and text analysis to improve the learning effect and improve reading ability. For example, the combination of catechism and flipped classroom teaching mode, "learning-centred", to develop college students' independent learning and communication skills. The flipped classroom requires students to study independently, using their time after class to watch lectures, audio and video, electronic literature and other mate-

rials, and participate in online group discussions to complete the transfer of new knowledge, and internalize pre-learning knowledge in the classroom learning. The combined teaching mode of micro-lessons and flipped classroom consists of four components: micro-video design and production, student independent learning, classroom cooperative teaching, and teacher-student reflection and summary.

2.6. Language Context Strategy

Language learning is closely related to culture and context, and reading text is also a product of context. The creation of language contexts should follow the principles of authenticity, concreteness and challenge. Reading teaching should bring students into real contexts, close to their actual lives, in line with their emotional experiences, and make abstract concepts concrete. Teachers can create concrete language contexts through language, objects, images, questions, and contrasting relationships between old and new knowledge and ideas. Creating quality language contexts is conducive to developing and improving students' core literacy in reading English texts.

2.7. Fine-Tuning Strategy

Reflective and interactive thinking is actively undertaken around the content of the text and in relation to students' reading practice. Teachers guide students to practice such aspects as giving examples in relation to reality, adding details to the text, making associations, imagining, asking questions, reasoning, identifying key points and synthesizing thematic ideas in the text to effectively improve their reading refinement skills. Teachers use information conversion tools (e.g. audio and video, board books, mobile phone apps, etc.) to set up reading classroom activities that simplify the difficulty of text content and facilitate the transformation of language input into effective language output. After class, teachers set up classroom activities such as group performances, speeches, presentations and writing to flexibly use content mapping and language mapping to consolidate language knowledge, deepen understanding of text content and develop comprehensive language skills.

2.8. Summarizing Strategy

Teachers or group members summarize, refine and construct mind maps on text topics to optimize and systematize students' knowledge systems and effectively improve learning efficiency. Teachers use a variety of forms of diagrams according to the genre of the text to sort out the structure of the text and to prepare the output for writing in the later stages of text reading.

3. Learning Strategies

A learning strategy is a system of operational responses in which learners, in a certain context and in response to a certain learning task, actively operates effec-

tively on the procedures, tools and methods of learning according to the general rules of learning, so as to improve the quality and efficiency of learning [8].

3.1. Prediction and Speculation Strategy

Before reading a text, students retrieve, review and relate their existing relevant background knowledge to predict and speculate on the content of the text. They then skim or scan the title, cover, table of contents, chapter names, preface (or foreword), introduction, etc., for specific purposes, to achieve an overall grasp of the text framework, to predict the general content of each chapter, to gain specific information about the text, to gain concrete impressions, to infer the author's attitude and tendencies, to infer the meaning of words according to the context, to preview key words and text structure, etc., and to further increase their interest in reading.

Teachers can also introduce topics by showing images, videos and objects related to the text, or by setting up situations, such as introducing background knowledge, asking questions or organizing discussions, and guiding students to draw on the headings, illustrations, diagrams and vocabulary of the text being read. Students are encouraged to predict the theme, genre, emotion and content of the text, and the teacher builds scaffolding and uses tools to help students remove vocabulary barriers.

3.2. Relating Strategy

Students combine their own English language foundations, apply interdisciplinary theory, draw on and integrate content from other disciplines, bridge the correlation between reading content and cognitive experience, and help the interaction of new and old knowledge to lay the foundation for readers to feel and internalize the profound connotations of the reading text.

3.3. Reading Aloud Strategy

Reading aloud is based on understanding the text in a coherent way, with emphasis on the reader's personal experience and inner feelings. Reading aloud assists the reader in translating parts of the text's content into the reader's expressive skills (as reflected in the way the language is expressed and the structure of the sentences). Purposeful, immersive reading aloud develops a sense of English sentence patterns and a good sense of language.

3.4. Sentence Pattern Training Strategy

Sentence pattern training is divided into mechanical drills (repetition method, conversion method, parallel sentence method), meaning drills (question and answer method, sentence conversion method, solitaire drill method, drill by diagram method) and communicative drills. Sentence patterns should be practised in conjunction with vocabulary revision and phrase usage. The number of basic sentence patterns in English is limited, and there are many rules for expanding

sentence patterns. Once the reader is familiar with the basic sentence patterns and their extension rules, he or she will gradually internalize them into his or her linguistic perception system and become a stereotype of English thinking through extensive speed-limited sentence training.

3.5. Visual Perception Training Strategy

Visual perception training increases the speed of response to thinking stereotypes. Training visual breadth can develop the reader's ability to read "at a glance" and improve reading difficulties such as slow reading speed and inability to quickly grasp the full content of a text; training visual discrimination can improve bad reading habits such as skipping words, missing words, adding words, subtracting words, misrecognizing words, skipping lines and missing lines; training students' ability to follow and examine objects with their eyes can improve visual breadth and speed; improve students' thinking and reading comprehension skills. Teachers guide students to adjust their reading speed at the right time, target key words and passages, and flexibly use a variety of reading skills in order to gradually improve readers' reading comprehension.

3.6. Summarizing and Expanding Strategy

Students are led to summarize the topic, screen the subject matter and break down the content based on the genre, chapter structure and rhetorical techniques of the text, further summarize the meaning of the passage and extract factual and detailed information. Then, from the shallow to the deep, from point to point, they can explore and extract the profound connotations of the sentences, paragraphs and chapters of the text, thus expanding the depth and breadth of students' reading. To do this, teachers should select extension content and use extension methods to implement the extension objectives.

3.7. Timed and Time-Limited Strategy

Timed and time-limited reading training can improve the speed of reading English texts. With the help of timing and time limits, readers read the text quickly and answer questions from the teachers that are relevant to their understanding of the text. Readers use this practice to correct poor reading habits and gradually expand their instantaneous "recognition spacing" to effectively improve students" reading speed and reading comprehension.

3.8. Skimming and Scanning Strategy

Skimming is the process of reading in a cursory manner in order to understand the general content of a text (e.g. the main idea of the text, the main message or the author's basic opinion); scanning is used in order to find specific information or material (e.g. words, phrases, numbers, text fragments, etc.). Extensive skimming training enables students to achieve a glance at the text. Students can gain timely access to useful knowledge and up-to-date information about spe-

cialist subjects and fields, while promoting reading speed and reading comprehension.

In the process of skimming texts, students are able to grasp the connections between text clusters, make good use of group reading and consecutive reading skills, and infer the meaning of words and passages in relation to their context. Specifically for text reading in examinations, students should interpret the question stem, grasp the centre and main points of the text passage as a whole, and focus on key statements and sentence clusters that contain answers to test questions. They should also skim and scan the text to make it more visual, imaginative and concrete by using scenario imagery, outline lists, key lines and sketch diagrams to sort out the context of the text. Teacher use guiding questions to direct students' attention to the main idea of the text. Students quickly skim through headings, opening paragraphs, closing paragraphs and opening sentences to gain insight into the text's sequence of events through chapter conjunctions and key words, and quickly find the topic sentences and key words in the paragraphs. Students are asked to complete answers to questions on text reading comprehension or to logically order the main points of the text.

3.9. Information Conversion Strategy

Teachers convert text readings into a variety of formats that can be used to check students' comprehension. Students are asked to present content in the form of notes, charts, tables, drawings, statistical charts, tree diagrams, flowcharts, mind maps, etc.; they are asked to guess the connotations and referential meanings of words and phrases; to complete the task of selecting and adding titles to texts; to answer questions at five levels: remembering, understanding, applying, creating and evaluating; to recall the content of texts to draw diagrams, connect lines, fill in tables, sort and complete information, etc.

3.10. Testing and Consolidation Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to test and consolidate the reader's understanding of the content of the text, to integrate reading skills and other language skills, and to consolidate, synthesize and internalize language knowledge. Readers summarize and integrate the content of the text, their own experiences, knowledge, interests and opinions, analyze the structure of the text, discuss the central themes, the intentions of the writing, the author's views and attitudes, etc., and then acquire and use new forms of language and actively engage in a variety of critical thinking. Readers integrate textual material and existing knowledge structures, evaluate language learning in a multidimensional way, update their thinking patterns, construct new ideas and propose new perspectives, and finally achieve the goal of learning and using the language.

3.11. Summarizing Strategy

Read the text and then summarize the main ideas to help students understand

and remember the text in its entirety. Students summarize the content of the text by organizing their own language with the help of themes, key messages and key words; discuss and retell the content of the text and continue to write the text story; rewrite the content of the text into a dialogue style, group dialogues and perform in roles; complete fill-in-the-blank questions based on the content of the text, etc.

3.12. Assessment Strategy

Based on reading assessment and feedback requirements, teachers refine and optimize multi-dimensional (e.g. teaching assessment, learning assessment, comprehensive assessment, etc.) and multi-format (e.g. teacher assessment, student self-assessment and student mutual assessment, etc.) approaches to reading assessment. Teachers can clarify the reading objectives, grasp the reading priorities, and reflect on and improve the whole process of reading English texts through immediate feedback from assessment [9].

4. Conclusions

The teaching strategies for learning in college English reading courses include attention, planning, grouping, questioning, multi-modality, language context, refinement, and summarization.

The learning strategies for learning in college English reading courses include prediction and speculation, association, reading aloud (reinforcement), sentence pattern training, visual perception training, extension, timing and time limitation, skimming and scanning, information transformation, testing and consolidation, generalization, and evaluation.

The strategies of grouping, prediction, and speculation are closely linked to acquisition and learning hypotheses. College students acquire second language through English reading courses with a solid cognitive foundation, mature thinking, and independent personality. Their acquisition process is very different from children's native language acquisition. Conscious acquisition and subconscious acquisition exist simultaneously and complement each other. In English reading classes, it does not work if the focus is merely on increasing language input and students' self-acquisition, while weakening teacher's teaching process. Acquired and learned knowledge can even be transformed into each other under certain conditions; thus, the learning and acquisition processes go hand in hand.

Strategies such as planning (meta-cognition), questioning, refinement, summarization, association, reading aloud (reinforcement), sentence training, generalization and expansion, timing and time-limiting, information transformation, testing and consolidation, evaluation, and monitoring hypothesis theory are integrated with each other. Children also use strategies such as meta cognition, association (syllables and meaning), reinforcement, and generalization under the guidance of parents and teachers in the process of second language acquisition,

and learning a certain amount of elementary grammar can also rapidly improve children's second language acquisition. By extension, college students' reading efficiency and accuracy can also be significantly improved by effectively using various learning strategies in English reading classes.

Grouping, language context, visual perception training, timing and time limits, skimming and scanning, and extension strategies intersect with input hypothesis theory. The progression of second language acquisition is dynamic and progressive, varying from person to person. Teachers' correct teaching strategies and college students' increasingly sophisticated reading strategies, combined with a large amount of textual information input in line with the nearest developmental zone theory, can help achieve the desired teaching effect.

The strategies of attention, multi-modality, processing, reading aloud, and affective filter hypothesis complement each other. The outward expression of college students' linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive abilities must be achieved through language output. Teachers should encourage and guide college students to actively output English content according to their specific teaching situations and students' circumstances (especially their emotions, attitudes, tendencies, and values) based on their individual needs.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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