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Review Article

The Application of ICT and Task-based Language Teaching in College English Teaching

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Abstract: The advent of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) changes the traditional model of college English teaching. The studies have shown that it improves English teaching and English learning. Task-based language teaching which conforms to the trend of the times is a new teaching method. This paper will analyze the significances and problems of the application of ICT in college English teaching which is organized by task-based language teaching, in the hopes of applying ICT in college English teaching based on task-based language teaching better**.**
Keywords: ICT, Task-based language teaching, College English teaching.

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of technology, ICT has penetrated all spheres of people's lives. The integration of ICT in education has also attracted a lot of educationalists attention. The advent of ICT provides great help for reforming traditional college English teaching model. It changes the language teaching model and makes it possible for learners and teachers to learn language and teach language in multimodal and multidimensional environments (Yu, 2011). College English Curriculum Requirements which was published by Ministry of Education in 2007 claims expressly that colleges should make full use of modern information technologies, adopt English teaching model which is based on computer and class and change the single teaching model with teachers at its core. The new teaching model should be supported by modern information technologies, especially internet technology and makes it possible that English teaching and learning don't limited to time and place to some extent and develop in the direction of individualized and autonomous learning.

Task-based language teaching, proposed in 1980s, is developed on the base of communicative teaching method. It overcomes the disadvantages of traditional teaching method which refers to the teacher at the class core and less attention of improving learners' communicative competence, and advocates designing real and meaningful tasks for learners to complete using target language with expectation of improving their communicative competence.The keys of task-based language teaching lie in the significance of task, communication and use of target language, which can be achieved in the class supported by ICT to a large extent (Wang, 2013).

This paper analyzes the significances and problems of the application of ICT in college English teaching which is organized by task-based language teaching, in the hopes of applying ICT into college English teaching based on task-based language teaching better.

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Task-based language teaching means that class teaching is organized by a series of tasks. During the performance of tasks, learners are expected to involve in, experience, interact, communicate and cooperate in order to give full play of their cognitive competence, activate their current target language resources(Peng, 2014). It proposes perceiving, learning and using target language in practice, which is an advanced teaching idea and is worth popularizing.

Quick Response Code

1. Definition of Task

The key of task-based language teaching is task. There are many scholars who continually make definition of task since its advent. Rod Ellis (2003) proposed that a task is "a work- plan that requires the learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed". He also thought that the tasks should have some gaps in order to make students complete these gaps through using target language to finish the tasks. In other words, students should pay primary attention to the pragmatic meaning of the task which has some gaps, and the evaluation of the performance of the task should be based on whether students have achieved the intended communication outcome using target language rather than the accuracy of prescribed language forms. Long（1996）defined a task from non-linguistic perspective. He thought that "a task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or some reward". Nunan (2004) defined task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right". Skehan (1998) thought that the priority should give to the meaning of the task, and the evaluation should be based on whether the task has been completed. That's to say, the task should emphasize how learners exchange information instead of what kind of form they use; the task should has possibility of happening in reality; learners should pay most attention to how to compete the task. English Curriculum Standard indicates that activities should be designed based on learners' life experience and interests, and its content and form should as real as possible which are helpful for learners to learn English knowledge, develop English ability and improve language applied ability in communication. The task must have included four elements: (1) express teaching objective. (2) Real or virtual context. (3) Concrete process with suitable degree of difficulty. (4) output. Only have these four elements, can it be called task-based language teaching (Yu, 2018).

2. Theoretical Bases

There are several theoretical bases for task-based language teaching including Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis and Theory of Situational Cognition.

First is Krashen's Input Hypothesis which claims that it is necessary to expose to comprehensible input which contains structure a bit beyond learners' current level of competence (i+ l).

Second is Long's Interaction Hypothesis which states that the development of language proficiency is promoted by face-to-face interaction and communication. According to Robinson (2001), "people of all ages learn languages best, inside or outside a classroom, not by treating the languages as an object of study, but by experiencing them as a medium of communication". This idea is central to the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), which posits that interaction in the target language is instrumental in facilitating acquisition of the L2.

Third is Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis which indicates that learning takes place when a learner encounters a gap in his or her linguistic knowledge of the second language. By noticing this gap, the learner becomes aware of it and may be able to modify his output so that he learns something new about the language (Sarka & Marketa, 2011).

Last is Theory of Situational Cognition. It emphasizes that the design of tasks should consider learners most. The content of activities should be practical in reality.

3. Procedures of Task-based Language Teaching

Skehan thought that task-based language teaching has three steps: pre-task, while-task and post-task.

In the pre-task, the teacher will present what will be expected from the students in the task phase, which is very important. It helps learners set learning objective, reduce their cognitive burden and lay the foundation of implementation successfully of tasks. It is worth noticing that teachers need adopt techniques to attract learners' attention.

While-task put emphasis on carrying out tasks, preparing for report and publishing report. In this stage, there is a task-chain consisting of several tasks. The implementation sequence of tasks should be arranged from easy to difficult, from primary to advanced. Teachers play the role of balancing learners' language accuracy and fluency.

Post-task contains making analysis about learners' performance and doing more practice. In this stage, teachers and classmates are expected to comment and correct partners' performance. The priority should be given to language accuracy. After that teachers should design other activities or decide repeating last stage's activities to make learners practice and consolidate knowledge.

ICT

There are different definitions of ICT in different fields. Albina Bilyalova defined ICT as a set of methods and techniques designed to collect, organize, store, process, transmit and present the

information which enlarge the social-cultural knowledge of students and provides them with a social-cultural competence. Some scholars claimed that this term refers to any new technology device or application used to communicate with others. ICT (information and communication technology) encompasses a diversity of applications which can be used in SLA class, for example internet, e-mails, blogs, online course platforms, chat-room, etc. (Yu, 2011).

There are many types of ICT, however, in which frequently used in college English teaching are three kinds: PowerPoint presentation, E-mail and CD-ROM.

1. Power Point Presentation

Power Point presentation is the one used in college English teaching most. Users can edit text, insert pictures, animation and hyperlink, set various background colors and so on. It presents the content that users want to show to audiences in a direct and lively way, which leaves a good impression on audiences(Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011). At present, most college teachers like using it to design teaching plan and show it to students in class. Meanwhile, learners are asked to do tasks using it. Comparing to traditional presentation, it has following characters: interactivity (the ability to choose and control the information); nonlinearity (the ability to present contents to audiences using hyperlink); dynamics (the ability to add, delete and change contents at any time).So it allows teachers and learners to produce high-quality PPT according to different topics.

2. E-mail

E-mail is the most popular and significant technology which possesses most users in the world. Users can make contact with other internet users in any corner around the world in a cheap and rapid way. It has functions of sending pictures, text, sounds and others. Its main role in teaching is that teachers are able to leave tasks using it and learners can also hand in the result of tasks to teachers through it and receive feedbacks. Teachers and learners can achieve timely and long-range contact in this way.

3. CD-ROM

CD-ROM is a kind of optical disk used in computer. Nowadays, many textbooks have CD-ROM which corresponds to each unit and each topic and includes teaching resources and tests. So teachers are able to integrate it in teaching procedures, and learners can learn conveniently and independently at home. It has following advantages: realization of individual approach and intensification of independent work of the student; creation communicative situations; enhancement cognitive activity, motivation and quality of students ' knowledge（Albina Bilyalova, 2017）.

The ADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS OF ICT APPLICATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING BASED ON TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. The Advantages

(1) Motivating Learners' Learning Interests And Increasing Their Learning Motivation.

ICT can show learners text, images, sounds, animations and others, which can motivate their learning interests. What's more, ICT allows learners to decide their learning speed and degree in accord with their learning situation, which creates chance for them to succeed, and increases their learning motivation.

(2) Creating Real Communicative Situation For Learners And Increasing Their Communicative Competence.

ICT provides learners with access to target countries' people and culture. They can increase their social skill during the process.

(3) Providing Chances for Learners to Learn Autonomously

The significant difference between task-based language teaching and traditional teaching method is the role of teachers and learners. In the class organized by task-based language teaching, the teacher plays the role of guiding, helping and valuating teaching activities. Learners need to take part in activities on their own initiative. They can learn autonomously through CD-ROM or online courses without the concern about time and place, and send learning results to teachers through E-mail or upload the result to online platform in order to make teachers, classmates and parents comment.

2. THE PROBLEMS

(1) Deficiency of Hardware

Nowadays, the economy and technology develop at a rapid speed. However, many schools still consider traditional language laboratory or digital language laboratory which only can transmit audio and video within it as multimedia network classrooms due to deficiency of finance and technology strength, conservative idea of investment and management and other reasons. On the other hand, multimedia network classrooms are used as machine rooms which only allow students to surf the internet. In a word, the construction of information infrastructures is in a bad situation due to the lack of comprehensive consideration of information resource, equipment resource and management resource of language teaching courses supported by internet equipment.

(2) Deficiency of Teaching Resource

Although there are a lot of online learning platforms and applications in the market, most of them aim at helping learners pass examinations and won't be used in class. Moreover, some textbook publishers cannot provide corresponding multimedia teaching database. Learners have no access to national

knowledge base and inferior resources are explored repeatedly (Dong，2002).

(3) Teachers' Conservative Notions

The application of ICT in teaching starts late domestically, so the traditional teaching concept exists in teachers' mind ineradicably. Teachers have not prepared well in mind for the revolution of ICT integrating in English class, which results in that they are either not use ICT in class or only regard them as pure teaching instruments. What's more, some teachers have not good command of usage of ICT. In face of rapid development of new technologies, English curriculum system, textbooks and teaching methods still remain as same as before which leads to the huge gap between rapid developed technologies and monotonous educational concept.

CONCLUSION

The application of ICT in college English teaching based on task-based language teaching has many advantages: increasing teaching efficiency, motivating learners' learning interests, strengthening their learning motivation, creating real target language environment for them and making learners learn autonomously. However, there are also some disadvantages for the application of ICT in college English teaching due to deficiency of hardware resource, teaching resource, teaching concept and technologies. So the degree of financial investment and technology development should be increased, the mobility of high-quality teaching resources should be enhanced; textbook publishers should equip textbooks with corresponding multimedia teaching database; teachers should renew their teaching concepts, learn ICT usage actively and use them in English teaching reasonably and effectively.

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