

Application Exploration of Encouraging Teaching Method in EFL Teaching from the Perspective of Krashen's Input Hypothesis

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Abstract: The independence of the students in their own characters make the effect of foreign language acquisition different in English foreign language teaching; to put it another way, English is more difficult to learn than other foreign languages for those students who acquire English as a second language. Previous studies have shown that emotion is one of the most important factors affecting foreign language acquisition. Emotional factors take many forms, such as self-esteem, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion/introversion. To study the effect of Encouraging Teaching Method on students' ability of foreign language acquisition in English teaching, this paper explores the application of "Encouraging Teaching Method" in English teaching based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis theory, explains and analyzes its strengths and weaknesses in more detail, and finally concludes that the proper use of "Encouraging Teaching Method" can better improve the quality of education and instruction.

1. Introduction

As one of the most influential languages in the world, English is an important part of students' all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, work and aesthetics. The ability of English learning is one of the important standards to evaluate a student's comprehensive quality. Encouraging teaching method is a kind of teaching method which mainly encourages students in an all-round way, so as to improve the practical teaching effect and improve students' ability to use English flexibly [1]. Based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis theory and second language acquisition theory, firstly, this paper strives to make new breakthroughs in the combination of encouraging teaching method and English teaching practice; secondly, based on the existing research framework and design, this paper will carry out in-depth analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of encouraging teaching method in English teaching, so as to make a rational understanding of encouraging teaching method beyond our stereotypical thoughts; finally, the paper will make English teachers look forward to the transformation and application of theoretical achievements.

2. Theoretical Basis

The study of second language acquisition includes the intrinsic characteristics of the language

learners, such as: language acquisition motivation, affective factors, etc; the external behavior of language learners, such as: language output, language learning strategies, etc; language learning environment, such as: language input, language error correction and other external factors [2]. The research results of second language acquisition play an important role in guiding English teaching. Krashen's input hypothesis [3] holds that only when the language acquirer is actually exposed to "acceptable language input" can it be transformed into acquisition, which is the famous Krashen's "i+1" theory. In the theory, "i" indicates the current learning level of the learner, while "1" indicates that the language material input is slightly more difficult than the current learning level of the learner. At the same time, Krashen says that an ideal language input can only be achieved if it has the following characteristics: intelligibility, interesting and relevant, and abundant language input [4].

The relevant achievements at home and abroad mainly focus on the advantages of encouraging teaching method in English teaching application, while the research on the dialectical effect of encouraging teaching method in English teaching highlights the superficial characteristics. Accordingly, confined to the discipline barrier, most of the previous achievements have blindly expounded the advantages of encouraging teaching method in English teaching. Hence, it is necessary and occasional to use other theoretical perspectives to comprehensively analyze the advantages and disadvantages of encouraging teaching methods in English teaching.

3. An Analysis of the Idea and Status Quo of English Teaching at Home and Abroad

3.1. Differences between Chinese and Western Language Culture

Language carries culture as well as the practice of English teaching. Eugene A Nida, American translator, believes that "languages in different cultural backgrounds have different impacts on the meaning of semantics and idioms, so all texts cannot be properly understood without a comprehensive understanding of language and cultural background" [5]. Therefore, language teachers will consciously extract the humanistic spirit contained in the subject and then permeate it into the students' daily learning process. English teaching not only teaches students subject knowledge, but also improves students' overall quality through the cultivation of humanistic quality. Accordingly, there is the mapping and output of a kind of culture behind each language. In order to study the content related to a language in a more comprehensive way, it is particularly critical to understand the relevant cultural background.

3.2. The Idea and Status Quo of English Teaching at Abroad

Shakespeare says that "The humanity is a how extraordinary masterpiece. Looks like a deity in the wisdom! Universe essence! The myriad things spirit is long!" Individuals have a deeper and more specific understanding of themselves [6]. Protagoras, an Ancient Greek Scholar, also puts forward the famous philosophical topic of "man is the measure of all things" [7], which proves that the Western emphasis on individualism has a long history. Western teaching ideas attaches great importance to the motivation and purpose of students' individual learning, which is the teaching philosophy of Western countries [8]. This is evidenced by the differences between Chinese and Western "Desk Cultures": in China, the desks in the classroom are generally arranged in rows and orderly; In the West, the desks in the classroom are generally in a circle, which shows that Chinese classroom generally employs the traditional mode of "teachers speak and students listen to the class", while western countries focus more on the communication and output of students' own ideas.

The current methods of English teaching in the West mainly include constructivism teaching

method, communicative method, humanistic teaching method, direct method, etc. Constructivism teaching method lays emphasis on the principal role of learners in the learning process and holds that learning is a self-construction process of learners and teachers are only the leaders, helpers, and evaluators of their construction activities, whose main teaching modes include scaffolding instruction, anchored instruction, etc.; major teaching theories include Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), humanistic teaching method, etc. In particular, the encouraging teaching method should be mentioned. Western teachers advocate encouraging ways to educate students and give them more respect and freedom. It is a teaching method that enables students to complete learning activities confidently and independently by creating a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. This paper will analyze the encouraging teaching method in the following paragraphs.

3.3. The Idea and Status Quo of English Teaching at Home

3.3.1. Stereotyped Teaching Model and Teaching Idea

Nowadays, although some new teachers have injected fresh teaching ideals into domestic English teaching, most of them are still dominated by the traditional teaching mode of “cramming education” and “Duck-stuffing type of teaching”, and the teachers are still the dominant holders in the classroom. In this traditional mode, students are under increasing pressure to study. Such limited teaching mode also makes students’ learning efficiency greatly reduced, and make students get half the result with twice the effort. In the long run, students dare not and are not adept at expressing their own ideas. They lack independence and creativity, and will be eliminated from the competitive society and find it difficult to get a foothold in the society when they go to work in the future.

3.3.2. The Difference of Education Quality and Educational Resources between Rural and Urban Areas

Modernization has brought about the increase of educational opportunities, but also the differences in the distribution of educational opportunities among social groups [9]. Jan Amos Komenský says “All children in urban and rural areas, whether their families are rich or poor, should go to school” [10]. Thus, the vision of educational equity has long existed, but in reality, the difference between urban and rural education quality has long been deeply rooted.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau puts forward the reasons for the unequal distribution of educational resources in “Resource allocation”. “Gaps, such as family genetics, family economic and social status, and preschool education, appear not after equality of opportunity, but before formal education begins,” he argues, “Every child is different, and these are the sources of gaps in their education” [11]. It can be seen that educational inequality is by no means accidental. It is the inevitable result of the comprehensive influence of various factors in the family. Although China has introduced the “double reduction policy” to ease the burden of excessive homework and off-campus tutoring for students undergoing compulsory education, so as to promote social education equality to a greater extent, the phenomenon of “unequal urban and rural educational resources” is still a lion in the way.

4. The Necessity of Encouraging Teaching Method in English Teaching

Rosenthal and Jakobson, two American psychologists, first proposed the Pygmalion Effect in 1968, later called the Rosenthal Effect or the Interpersonal Expectation Effect. It refers to the phenomenon that teachers have a deep hope for students to achieve the desired results. Generally speaking, this situation is mainly because teachers expect two different behaviors of students with high talent and students with low talent respectively, and treat them in two different ways at the

same time, which maintains their original behavior pattern. If it is projected into Krashen’s “i+1” input hypothesis theory, encouraging teaching method is the “additive” that makes the input process of “i+1” more reasonable and effective. (Figure 1)

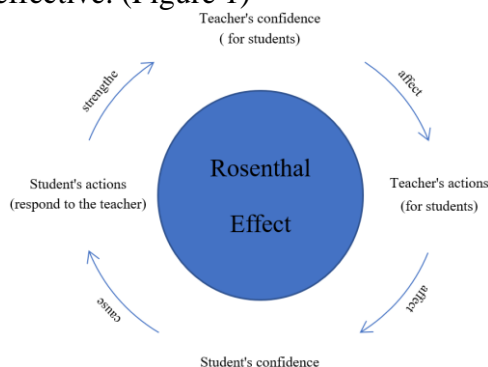


Figure 1: Rosenthal Effect (Rosenthal and Jakobson, 1968)

4.1. Stimulating Students’ Enthusiasm in Learning English

With the growth of grade, the increase of learning subjects, difficulty, etc., students are constantly faced with problems. At this time, they are more likely to be afraid of difficulties, and have low interest in learning. At this point, if the English teacher can often encourage the students, the students will be more confident and interested in English learning to a large extent, which makes a good start for the following English learning.

4.2. Enhancing Learning Confidence

Student is a vulnerable group with high self-esteem, and whether in school or in life, they want to show others that they are unique. In this special period, teachers’ evaluation of students must be appropriate, and should take encouragement as the main way. When students have inappropriate answers to questions, teachers can adopt transference encouraging evaluation, namely, to avoid students’ weaknesses and promote their strengths, for example, “Your intonation is excellent and you are brave enough to answer questions. You are a good example to follow.” instead of saying “Your answer is wrong”. Two different evaluation methods have completely different impacts on students: the former will make students happy and more confident in English learning; the latter will make students feel ashamed, and may not dare to speak freely in English class in the future, then they will be full of fear of English learning, and their self-esteem will be seriously damaged.

4.3. Cultivating Equal Relationship between Teacher and Student

In teaching practice, it is not difficult to find that the younger the teacher, the more relaxed the classroom atmosphere, and teachers and students often learn from each other in an equal way; while some elder teachers’ classroom atmosphere will be obvious “quiet”, most students dare not take the initiative to speak. The root of the problem is that the teaching ideas of young teachers are more appropriate to the development characteristics of students, and they can better implement teaching from the perspective of students and draw distance from students, so as to strengthen the trust between students and teachers [12].

In contrast, elder teachers are deeply influenced by traditional teaching ideas, and they cannot quickly adapt to the “student-oriented” teaching idea in the new era. When students make mistakes, elder teachers will severely criticize them. The so-called “A strict teacher produces outstanding students” is the “dogma” that they always keep in mind. They dissimilate the role of teachers into a

disciplinarian of behavior, constantly unify students' behavior so that students can form a sense of obedience [13].

Therefore, compared with the two different teaching groups, the equal teacher-student relationship is more popular among students, which makes it easier for students to generate their love for the subject, and thus more confident and passionate about English learning, while the traditional teaching idea will inevitably disappear with the development of the era.

4.4. Realizing the “Zone of Proximal Development” of Students

Lev Vygotsky, Soviet psychologist and social constructionist, proposed the ZPD theory. To put it into teaching practice, the “Zone of Proximal Development” refers to the gap between the current learning level of students and their potential learning development level. If teachers want to stimulate the potential of students, they must start from the “Zone of Proximal Development” and formulate practical teaching plans to help students achieve their own development of “Zone of Proximal” [14]. In English classes, teachers should pay more attention to the guidance and encouragement of divergent thinking for students, which can stimulate “cognitive conflict” in the “activity process” and guide and encourage students to think a question from more different perspectives, for example, teachers can use “brainstorming” to get into a new class. (Figure 2)

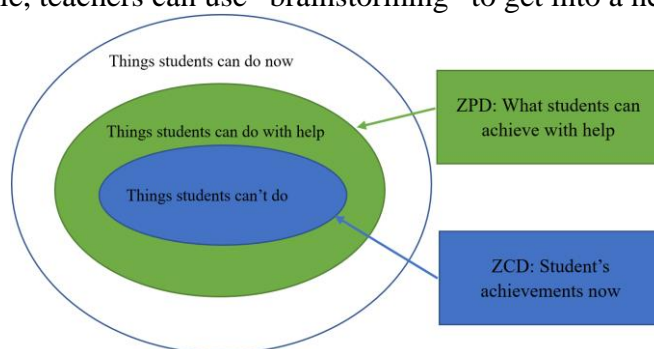


Figure 2: The relationship between student's ZCD and ZPD

5. The Problems of Encouraging Teaching Method to be Avoided in English Teaching

5.1. To Avoid a Single Form of Encouragement and Advocate Diversification

The principle of diminishing marginal utility is the basic theory of western economics, which is mainly reflected in the condition that diminishing marginal utility is required to remain constant under other conditions. Assuming an input factor is continuously increasing in equal amount, the psychological satisfaction degree of each unit is continuously diminishing [15]. In other words, when it is applied in teaching, if teachers use the same kind of teaching language too frequently, students' psychological satisfaction will gradually decrease, thus losing the original purpose of teaching language.

Students are interested in something new, and colorful English classes and teachers' encouragement are the necessary way to improve the teaching effect. First of all, teachers can take language encouragement. For example: “this text memorization is great, continue to work hard” etc. If students are exposed to an environment surrounded by kinds of encouraging language, they will be very happy, and have a close relationship with their teachers and learn more effectively. Secondly, teachers can take material encouragement. Material encouragement is the most direct way of encouragement, its effect of encouragement is even more significant than language encouragement. For example, after an exam, teachers can give material rewards to students who do well, such as a book, a pen. The prize does not need to be expensive, but it is the recognition of the student's

academic performance, and the students will use the rewards as motivation to continue to work hard in the future. However, “repeated material rewards” should be avoided. If everything about learning is related with material rewards, students’ psychology of vanity may be indulged virtually. Holding utilitarianism too strongly, learning motivation is not simple and the final learning effect will be greatly terrible.

5.2. To Avoid Blind Encouragement and Adhere to the Principle of Moderation

For one thing, teachers should encourage the performance of students according to their different characteristics of personality. Each student has his own special shining point, so the teacher’s encouragement should be specific and actual, for example, teachers can say more like “Your voice and intonation are particularly good, you can be our little teacher” “Your memory is great” etc., rather than always say such a stereotyped language encouragement like “You are great”. For another thing, the teacher’s encouragement should be “moderate”; excessive praise, improper praise is not conducive to the healthy development of students. Carol S. Dweck, Professor at Stanford University, has conducted experiments on the effect of praise on children, which shows that children who are constantly told they are smart are more likely to develop rigid thinking and carry a lot of baggage so that they finally form fragile high self-esteem. Therefore, English teachers should advocate a reasonable type of “encouraging teaching” to achieve “tempering justice with mercy”.

5.3. To Avoid the Old-Fashioned Ideas and Improve the Personal Quality of Teachers

The imitateness and teacher-orientation of student are very obvious. When they find that their teachers are knowledgeable, they will respect them and be eager to learn from them further, so they will be interested in their lessons. Furthermore, teachers should have unique professional skills, also called teaching skills. Just as Shakespeare said, “There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people’s eyes”, different teachers also have different teaching methods, and each has its own unique features, which also reflects the current teachers should repeatedly “study” the same lesson to achieve “heterogeneous forms for the same lesson”, and then trigger the collision and communication between the mind and the soul.

5.4. To Avoid Encouraging Imbalance and Adhere to the Principle of Fairness

If the encouraging teaching method is compared to a scale, it must be based on the students, and it cannot make itself unbalanced and miss the original teaching effect. In most teaching practices, students with good grades are more likely to have “protagonist privilege” --they are always the favorite students of teachers. On the contrary, students with poor grades are more likely to become the teacher’s “punching bag” at any time, and the slightest mistakes will lead to the teacher’s harsh criticism. Attitude equality is the psychological condition of building a harmonious learning community [16]. Therefore, English teachers should “give even-handed treatment”, so as to form a more harmonious relationship between teachers and students. If there is an imbalance of encouragement, it will be counterproductive.

6. Conclusion

Under the background of “student-oriented” new curriculum reform idea, encouraging teaching method has become a practical and effective teaching method in English teaching. This paper makes a specific explanation and analysis of the encouraging teaching method from the perspective of Krashen input hypothesis, and finally draws the following conclusions: Different from the traditional teaching idea, the encouraging teaching method is no longer a simple change of teaching methods, but a change based on the change of the role of teachers, namely, teachers should be the

role of “guide” rather than “dominator”; the role of “innovator” rather than “fuddy-duddy”; the role of “encourager” rather than “critic”.

Based on this, teachers can make students have more clear learning motivation and enhance learning confidence, so as to improve the learning effect. Only by changing the teaching idea, taking student-oriented teaching mode in the actual English classroom, combining the characteristics of students’ physical and mental development with the teaching practice organically, taking encouragement as the main part and criticism as the auxiliary part, properly using encouragement and criticism, and effectively using the encouraging teaching method, can English teachers promote the overall improvement of the quality of English education and teaching, enhance students’ learning interest to the maximum extent, and relieve learning anxiety, which makes students study in a relaxed and happy atmosphere, and make them work hard but not painful. Teachers and students are two different groups of labor in the same learning task, and they are inseparable and help each other. If each group plays his role well, the teaching effect will be twice the result with half the effort.

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