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Adaptive Improvement Strategies of Task-Based Teaching Method in Higher Vocational English Teaching

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Abstract: With the deepening of the "double high" construction of higher vocational education and the reform of English teaching, traditional teaching methods have problems such as low participation, weak practicality, and insufficient learning conversion rate in stimulating students' participation and improving their practical language application ability. To this end, this paper introduces "TBLT" and combines the ability structure and growth characteristics of higher vocational students to explore its adaptive improvement strategies in actual teaching, so as to improve the efficiency of classroom language interaction and autonomous learning ability. The study takes "Unit 2 Friendship" teaching as the starting point, designs an English teaching program that integrates task orientation, group collaboration and situational practice, and refines the dimensions of task design, including language input and output, visual creation, thinking organization and cooperative awareness. During the implementation process, by setting pre- and post-evaluation indicators, participation observation scales and task performance scoring standards, the changes in students' language ability and learning motivation are systematically monitored. The results showed that TBLT performed significantly in improving students' English output accuracy, classroom participation and group cooperation: the average improvement rate of oral assessment of students in the experimental group reached 24.5%, the frequency of active questioning and interaction in class was significantly higher than that of the control group, and the average score of autonomous learning ability increased to 4.4 (out of 5 points). This study verifies the effectiveness of TBLT in higher vocational English teaching scenarios and proposes feasible improvement paths, such as hierarchical task allocation, heterogeneous group configuration and staged task feedback mechanism, to further promote the refinement of students' comprehensive language literacy.

1. Introduction

In the context of the rapid development of global vocational education, English, as an important component of vocational skills, has a direct impact on students' workplace competitiveness through its teaching effect. In recent years, English teaching in vocational schools has increasingly faced

problems such as "disconnection between learning and application, low participation, and single teaching model". To solve these bottlenecks, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been widely introduced into the practice of English teaching reform due to its concept of "task-based, student-centered, and language practical application-oriented". Existing studies have shown that this teaching method helps improve students' language output, communication skills and classroom participation, and to some extent alleviates students' English anxiety and stimulates their learning motivation.

Despite this, existing research has mostly focused on the selection of teaching tools, the integration of technical means (such as games, AI, CAI, etc.) or students' English learning barriers themselves, but has been insufficient in exploring "how the teaching method itself can be deeply adapted to the learning behavior, cognitive ability, and professional background of vocational college students", especially the lack of systematic empirical analysis centered on TBLT.

Based on this, this paper focuses on the adaptive application of TBLT in higher vocational English teaching, and designs a control experiment based on multi-dimensional indicators such as students' language ability, autonomous learning ability, classroom participation and task performance. It aims to explore and optimize the application path and effectiveness of this teaching method in actual teaching situations, and provide feasible strategies and data support for the reform of English teaching in vocational colleges.

2. Related Works

In recent years, research on the reform and innovation path of English teaching in vocational education has been continuously deepened. Many scholars have conducted extensive discussions from the perspectives of digital technology application, teaching content adaptation, and student learning experience, and have formed the following representative research results:

Ahmadian et al. discussed how English teachers in four gender-oriented vocational classes in Norway used the digital game "Adventures with Anxiety" in teaching. Through classroom videos, game screen recordings and teacher interviews, he found that teachers used the game to improve language skills and guide students to understand anxiety [1]. Islam analyzed the English learning methods and teaching material needs of students at SMK Hafsawaty Zainul Hasan Genggong Vocational School. Through interviews and questionnaires, it was found that teachers' teaching methods were more in line with students' understanding ability, but the existing teaching materials were not fully targeted at the needs of Islamic banking majors [2]. Tividad investigated the views of teachers, students and alumni of Valenzuela City Polytechnic College in the Philippines on their needs for English and found that oral communication, grammar, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, reading comprehension and workplace communication were the main needs [3]. Yıldırım explored the English learning experience of students in a vocational school of a state university in Turkey. Through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, he found that students generally had weak English foundation, lack of motivation to learn, indifference to English education, and strong inferiority complex [4]. Ferdaus and Novita analyzed the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in English teaching at a vocational high school in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Through observation and interviews, it was found that the curriculum has been widely promoted, but there are challenges for teachers to shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered teaching philosophy [5]. Rosyadi et al. used a systematic literature review method to focus on the important role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the field of education, especially vocational education. After screening relevant literature from the Scopus database from 2018 to 2023, it was found that AI technology has significant potential in improving teaching efficiency, personalized learning and overall teaching effectiveness [6]. Prasetiyowati et al. explored the difficulties faced by vocational

school students in learning oral English, mainly manifested in difficulties in expression due to insufficient vocabulary and hesitation. As students majoring in tourism, they need to have good English speaking skills. The study pointed out that communication strategies can help students overcome oral barriers and make their expressions clearer and more meaningful [7]. Hoang et al. explored the effect of the artificial intelligence chatbot Mission Fluent on improving students' English pronunciation in a vocational college in Hanoi, Vietnam. Through a quasi-experimental design, 60 vocational students participated in the A1 English course, and the pronunciation of the experimental group was significantly better than that of the control group [8]. Lubis and Fithriani aimed to explore the difficulties encountered by English teachers in a vocational high school in Mandalay Natal, North Sumatra, Indonesia, when using computer-assisted instruction. Through interviews and classroom observations, it was found that teachers faced many challenges in the application of technology, including the long time required to improve technical skills and the lack of sufficient technical resources and support [9]. Aryawan analyzed the important role of vocational education in cultivating students' employability in vocational high schools and the challenges they faced. Vocational education emphasizes the combination of theory and practice to meet the needs of the industry, but there are problems in curriculum setting, teaching quality and English teaching [10]. Zidni developed Digital Vocabulary Pocket Book (DVPB) as a learning medium to address the difficulty of vocabulary mastery among students majoring in online business and marketing in vocational high schools. The ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model was used for research and development. In expert verification, the feasibility scores of language, media and content all reached more than 89%, and the student feedback satisfaction rate reached 94% [11]. However, although existing research focuses on the integration of teaching tools, student needs and technology, it is still insufficient in the deep integration and systematic empirical verification of "teaching methods and student cognitive behavior adaptation".

3. Methods

3.1 Focusing on Task Design and Stimulate Enthusiasm for Learning Participation

The core of TBLT lies in the reasonable design and implementation of tasks. This teaching method advocates guiding students to actively use the target language to communicate and cooperate through language activities with clear goals and practical significance. In higher vocational English teaching, teachers should design tasks close to real life and professional situations according to students' cognitive level and professional background, so as to enhance the practicality and purposefulness of language learning. For example, project tasks can be arranged around themes such as "business meeting preparation" and "simulated customer reception", so that students can truly use English to communicate and express themselves in the process of completion, thereby stimulating their initiative and enthusiasm for language learning.

Task-based teaching emphasizes that students should change from passive recipients of knowledge to active executors of tasks and problem solvers. In this process, students deepen their understanding and internalization of language knowledge through personal experience and practical activities, significantly improving their participation and motivation in learning.

3.2 Promoting Language Use and Expand Output Expression Space

Traditional teaching models often focus on the input of language knowledge, while ignoring students' language output in real contexts. TBLT emphasizes promoting language acquisition in communication, with particular emphasis on language use and output. Vocational English teaching can combine oral practice, role-playing, situational simulation, project reports and other diverse

language tasks to encourage students to use language at multiple levels and enhance their practical expression ability.

For example, when teaching "Unit 2 Friendship" and other content, teachers can design and make "Friendship Booklet" tasks, allowing students to complete a comprehensive task that integrates reading, writing, design and presentation by consulting materials, organizing language, and coordinating in combination with the unit theme. This process exercises students' information integration ability and creativity, and also improves their language organization ability and cooperation awareness.

Language output helps students test what they have learned, discover misunderstandings, and correct and consolidate them. With the design concept of task-based teaching, teachers can build real scenarios for language use for students and create a large number of output opportunities, thereby achieving the teaching goal of "learning by using, and learning by using".

3.3 Optimize Group Cooperation and Enhance Learning Effectiveness

In order to enhance the execution effect of tasks, teachers should reasonably divide learning groups during the teaching process. Vocational college students have differences in learning motivation, self-discipline, and stress resistance. Appropriate group combination can promote cooperation and mutual assistance within the group, and achieve the goal of leading the weak with the strong and promoting the new with the excellent.

Before organizing tasks, teachers should analyze students' characteristics from multiple dimensions, including English foundation, art skills (such as typesetting and illustration skills), interpersonal communication skills, learning attitude and cooperation habits, etc. In the "Friendship Booklet" task, students with strong art skills but average language skills can be assigned to a group with students with strong language expression skills, and then assisted by members with organizational and coordination skills to complete the task together. This heterogeneous grouping method can take into account the skills and qualities required for each task and improve the overall cooperation efficiency.

At the same time, teachers can flexibly adjust the group structure according to the specific performance of students in task execution to ensure that each student has room to play in the task and gain growth and feedback in cooperation.

3.4 Strengthening Learning Process Management and Improve Feedback and Reflection Awareness

TBLT focuses on students' final output, and pays more attention to their thinking mode, behavior performance and language usage during the task execution process. In this process, teachers need to change their roles from knowledge transmitters to task guides, activity organizers and learning promoters, and pay attention to students' staged progress and actual performance.

Specifically, teachers should provide necessary strategic guidance and situational support at each stage of task execution, and guide students to actively seek help or adjust their solution paths when they encounter difficulties. In addition, teachers should provide targeted feedback in a timely manner to help students recognize their own language problems and thinking deviations, and guide them to make progress through continuous corrections.

After the task is completed, students can be guided to display their achievements, share their experiences and reflect on the task, thus achieving a closed teaching loop from "doing tasks" to "learning language" and then to "understanding the process", improving the systematicness and sustainability of language learning.

3.5 Designing Diversified Task Forms to Avoid Student Resistance

In teaching practice, single and repetitive task forms often easily trigger students' resistance and reduce their enthusiasm for participation. To this end, TBLT should combine students' cognitive development stage, scientifically arrange task difficulty and form, and gradually improve students' participation experience and learning effect.

In the early stage of teaching, simple oral tasks can be set, such as self-introduction, conversations asking for directions, daily communication exercises, etc., to help students build pragmatic confidence; as the course progresses and students' abilities improve, complex tasks are gradually introduced, such as role-playing, project reports, mock debates, etc., to improve their language thinking and expression abilities.

In addition, after-class tasks should also focus on practicality and creativity. For example, students can be required to independently write situational dialogues, make grammar mind maps, or write grammar explanation PPTs based on the grammar and vocabulary they have learned. Such tasks can help students consolidate classroom content and effectively promote the transfer and comprehensive application of knowledge.

3.6 Cultivating Independent Learning Ability and Enhance Future Resilience

TBLT emphasizes that students should take initiative and be creative in completing tasks. Students need to choose strategies on their own and complete the problem-solving process independently or collaboratively. This learning method can effectively cultivate their self-management and independent thinking abilities.

Vocational English teaching should stimulate students' sense of learning responsibility through task design, and guide them to face challenges, make plans, adjust strategies, and solve problems in the execution of tasks. This series of processes improves students' language application ability and lays a foundation for their ability to respond flexibly in a changing business English environment in the future.

Through continuous task implementation, students can gradually form task-oriented learning habits, learn to solve language problems in real contexts, and have the communication and adaptability to complex workplace situations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Experimental Subjects

Experimental school: Business English major in a certain vocational college

Experimental class: Two parallel classes (about 80 students in total), with similar English proficiency

Grouping method:

Experimental group: Adopt the task-based teaching improvement strategy proposed in this study

Control group: Adopt the traditional teaching method based on teacher lectures

4.2 Experimental Period

Experimental period: a complete teaching unit (4-6 weeks), with "Unit 2 Friendship" and "Unit 4 Career Planning" in the textbook as the core content.

Weekly class hours: 4 class hours (45 minutes per class hour)

4.3 Experimental Process

(1) Pre-test stage

English language comprehensive ability test (including listening, speaking, reading and writing) can be conducted to ensure that there is no significant difference in English proficiency between the experimental group and the control group.

Questionnaires on learning motivation, autonomous learning ability and class participation can be conducted (Likert 5-level scale).

(2) Teaching implementation stage

The teaching content of the experimental group uses the TBLT improvement strategy, and the tasks include but are not limited to:

Friendship Booklet group project;

Role play (such as workplace interview simulation);

Grammar summary and situational application demonstration;

Situational dialogue writing and presentation;

The teaching content of the control group is the traditional teaching method, which mainly consists of teacher explanation, textbook exercises and vocabulary memorization.

(3) Process observation and data collection

Teachers regularly record student participation.

After each class, the "Task Participation Observation Form" can be used to quantify students' classroom performance.

Process test: vocabulary comprehension, grammar application, oral expression, etc.

(4) Post-test stage

The English language proficiency test and learning attitude questionnaire are also used;

The changes in language proficiency, participation, and autonomous learning between the experimental group and the control group can be compared;

Students' feedback on the teaching method is collected (interview or open-ended questionnaire).

4.4 Data Analysis Method

This experiment uses TBLT for the experimental group and traditional teaching method for the control group. The English language proficiency of the two groups of students is evaluated by pre-test and post-test, respectively, in order to compare the effects of different teaching modes on language proficiency improvement.

The experimental results show that the language ability of students in the experimental group improved significantly better than that of the control group. Specifically, the average score of the experimental group in the pre-test was 64.5 points, and the average score in the post-test increased to 80.3 points, with an average improvement of 15.8 points and an improvement rate of 24.5%. The average score of the control group in the pre-test was 65.2 points, and the average score in the post-test was 71.8 points, with an improvement of only 6.6 points and an improvement rate of 10.1%. This shows that TBLT is effective in improving students' language skills, nearly twice as effective as traditional teaching.

Further analysis of the individual performance in Figure 1 shows that most students in the experimental group have improved significantly. S01 improved by 16 points, with an improvement rate of 25.81%, and S02 improved by 15 points, with an improvement rate of 22.06%. In contrast, the improvement of students in the control group was relatively limited, such as S03, who only improved by 7 points, with an improvement rate of 10.77%. S04 increased by 4 points, with an improvement rate of 6.06%. This shows that TBLT can better stimulate students' language potential and promote the improvement of their comprehensive language application ability. It is worth

noting that the pre-test scores of the two groups of students are close, with the experimental group scoring 64.5 points and the control group scoring 65.2 points, which eliminates the influence of starting point differences on the results and enhances the credibility of the experimental conclusions. In addition, the improvement rate, as a relative indicator, more intuitively reflects the actual effect of the teaching method, further confirming the advantages of TBLT in higher vocational English teaching.

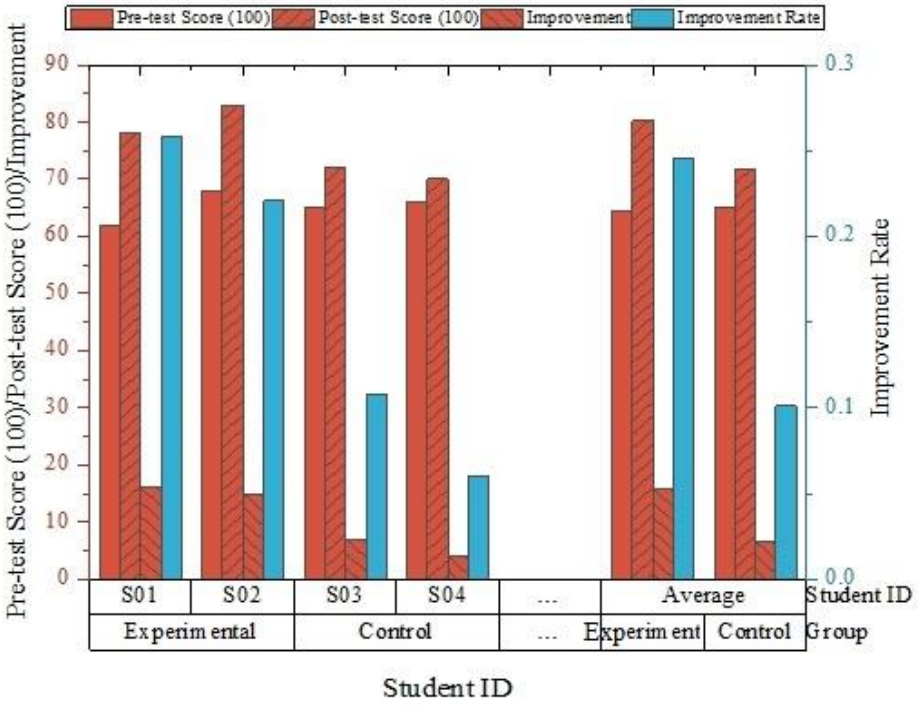

Figure 1 Comparison of language ability tests before and after the experiment (experimental group vs control group)

The classroom participation score adopts the Likert scale (1-5 points), which is evaluated from three dimensions: task speaking frequency, group interaction initiative, and classroom questioning behavior, so as to fully reflect the students' activeness in class.

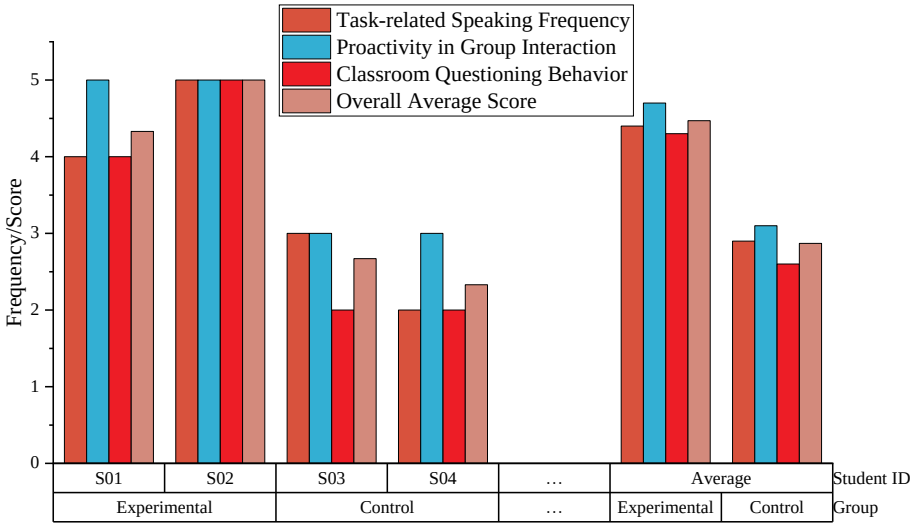

Figure 2 Student Class Participation Rating (Likert 1-5 points)

The experimental group students performed significantly better than the control group in all indicators. Specifically, the experimental group scored an average of 4.4 points in the frequency of task speaking, 4.7 points in group interaction initiative, 4.3 points in classroom questioning behavior, and a total average score of 4.47 points. The control group scored 2.9 points, 3.1 points, and 2.6 points, respectively, with a total average score of only 2.87 points (Figure 2). The data show that students who use TBLT participate in class more frequently, and are more active in group cooperation and proactive questioning, and their overall class participation has significantly improved.

Individual data also support this conclusion. For example, S02, a student in the experimental group, scored full 5 points in all three dimensions, showing a high degree of class involvement; in contrast, S04, a student in the control group, scored lower, indicating that his class participation was relatively passive. It is worth noting that the experimental group scored particularly high in group interaction initiative, with an average score of 4.7, which reflects the significant role of TBLT in promoting students' cooperation and communication skills. By enhancing students' classroom participation, it not only improves their learning enthusiasm, but also creates a good environment for improving language output and practical skills.

The Likert scale (1-5 points) was used to evaluate students' autonomous learning ability, and the attitude and behavior of students' autonomous learning were evaluated from three aspects: information search initiative, task preparation, and learning reflection frequency. The results showed that the students in the experimental group were significantly better than those in the control group in all dimensions of autonomous learning ability.

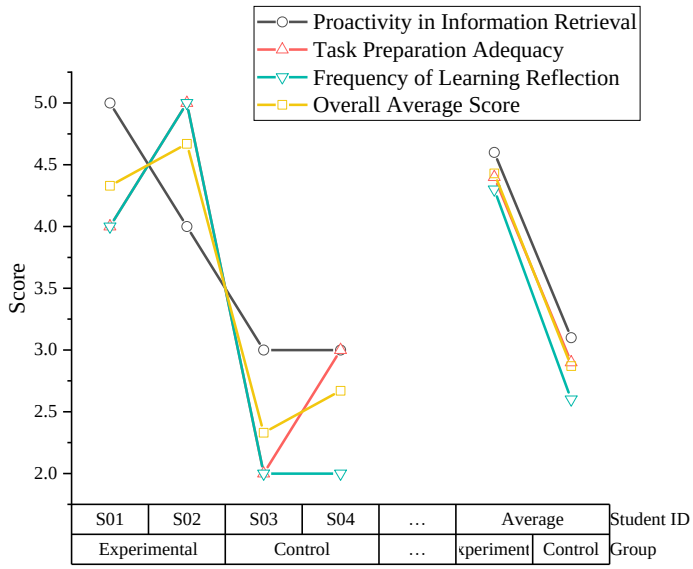

Figure 3 Self-evaluation of students' autonomous learning ability (Likert 1-5 points)

The experimental group scored the highest in information search initiative, with an average of 4.6 points, task preparation sufficiency with an average of 4.4 points, and learning reflection frequency with an average of 4.3 points, with a total average score of 4.43 points. In contrast, the control group scored an average of 3.1 points, 2.9 points, and 2.6 points in these three items, with a total average score of only 2.87 points. The data in Figure 3 show that TBLT effectively stimulates students' ability to actively acquire information, fully prepare for learning tasks, and conduct timely learning reflection.

At the individual level, students in the experimental group, such as S02, scored full marks of 5 points in task preparation and learning reflection, reflecting a strong sense and ability of

autonomous learning; while students in the control group performed relatively averagely, lacking initiative and reflective habits. The experimental group scored particularly well in information search initiative, indicating that this teaching model can guide students to actively explore learning resources and promote their self-driven learning. By cultivating autonomous learning ability, TBLT improves students' learning efficiency and lays a solid foundation for their future sustainable development.

Task performance evaluation is conducted through the teacher scoring system, covering three dimensions: task completion, creative performance, and teamwork, with a full score of 5 points, to comprehensively evaluate students' performance during task execution.

Table 1 Task performance evaluation (teacher scoring system, full score of 5 points)

Group ID	Group	Task Completion	Creativity Performance	Team Collaboration	Total Score (Average)
G01	Experimental	5	4	5	4.67
G02	Experimental	4	5	4	4.33
G03	Control	3	2	3	2.67
G04	Control	3	3	2	2.67
…	…	…	…	…	…
Average	Experimental	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.57
Average	Control	3	2.8	2.9	2.9

All indicators of the experimental group were significantly better than those of the control group. The average score of the experimental group for task completion was 4.6, the average score for creative performance was 4.4, the average score for teamwork was 4.7, and the average total score was 4.57. The corresponding scores of the control group were 3.0, 2.8, and 2.9, respectively, and the average total score was only 2.9, as shown in Table 1. The results show that the groups using TBLT performed well in terms of comprehensiveness, innovation and cooperation efficiency of task execution, far exceeding the traditional teaching model.

Specifically, the experimental group, such as G01, scored 5 points in both task completion and teamwork, showing a high sense of task responsibility and collaborative spirit. Group G02 scored 5 points in creative performance, showing good innovation ability. In contrast, the control group generally scored low, reflecting the lack of task execution and insufficient cooperation. The task performance evaluation results further confirmed the role of TBLT in improving students' comprehensive abilities, especially its significant advantages in promoting teamwork and innovation awareness.

5. Conclusions

This paper focuses on the adaptive application of TBLT in higher vocational English teaching, and systematically explores its effectiveness in improving students' language ability, autonomous learning ability, classroom participation and task performance. Through comparative experiments, the study found that the experimental group of students were significantly better than the control group in terms of language performance improvement, self-assessment performance and participation, which verified that teaching activities based on real tasks can effectively stimulate students' learning motivation and inherent potential. Classroom observations and student feedback also showed that TBLT can promote cooperative learning and enhance students' actual language application ability, especially suitable for vocational English courses that emphasize practice and communication. In addition, the role of teachers in teaching has also changed from knowledge imparter to guide and organizer, further enriching the level of teaching interaction.

Although the research has achieved positive results, there are still certain limitations. On the one

hand, the number of experimental samples is limited, and the generalizability of the data still needs to be expanded. On the other hand, task design still focuses on the interaction between language tasks and situations, and the integration of industry English needs of students from different professional backgrounds needs to be deepened. Future research can combine AI-assisted tools, professional English modular design and other means to further explore the expansion path and continuous optimization strategy of task-based teaching in the diversified professional scenarios of higher vocational education, so as to achieve a wider range and higher quality teaching effect improvement.

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