

EPBs Reading in Experiential Philosophy

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Abstract: Experiential philosophy is the philosophical basis of cognitive linguistics, emphasizing the result of the interaction between the subject and object in practice. The mind is experiential, which is the core of experiential philosophy. Experiential learning emphasizes the learners, and attaches more importance to the active relationship between experience and experience in the learning process, which provides a theoretical basis for the reading and learning of English picture books (EPBs for short). This paper discusses the theoretical origin and function of EPBs reading from three aspects, the experiential mind, the unconsciousness of cognition and the metaphorical thinking. Some suggestions for reading EPBs are put forward as well.

1. Introduction

English Picture Books (EPBs for short) are widely accepted as an effective way to stimulate children learners to enjoy both reading and language acquisition. Many researchers have joined the study of EPBs reading, some of their studies are about the detailed approaches, some researchers trace the EPBs reading to different perspectives, like psychology or second language acquisition, philosophical perspective study on EPBs has already started, but more satisfying research fruits and more detailed instructive approaches may inspire the researcher to do further work. Attempts are made in this thesis: EPBs reading is traced to experiential learning approach from its origin and detailed suggestions on EPBs reading are proposed as well.

Experiential philosophy is the philosophical basis of cognitive linguistics, emphasizing that cognition comes from practice, and metaphor is the result of experience and cognition, and the result of interaction between subject and object. This provides a theoretical basis for the reading and learning of English picture books.

2. The Connotation of Experiential Philosophy and its Principles

Philosophy is the foundation of linguistics. Cognitive linguistics is based on experiential philosophy. The earliest experiential philosophy is put forward by Lakoff and Johnson [1]. Thinking is experiential or embodied, which is the core of experience philosophy.

We experience and perceive the world through and experience the world through human mind. Induction, generalization and reasoning of the concept of the mental process is objective, but cognitive unconsciousness makes us fail to get direct intuition about our thoughts in mind, even though the analysis of neural process is complicated, we are unable to know it. Most of human reasoning cannot be realized, and the acquisition of language is carried out unconsciously as well.

Experiential learning theory is based on experiential philosophy, and the main advocate of this theory is David Kolb. He suggests that experience is the source and path of learning and development [2]. Experiential learning shares similarity with Confucius' and Xun Zi's theory, which stress the importance of gaining knowledge through physical exertion and experience. The principles of experiential philosophy are as followed:

2.1 Experiential mind

The mind is the way people experience the world and the product of physical experience. The mental experience is objective. People develop categories and concepts in experience of interaction with the outside world, and the semantics are formed at the same time [3]. Meaning is based on

perception, perception is based on physiological structure. In brief, meaning comes down to our own experience, people can't get close to reality without relying on the cognitive activity of thinking.

2.2 Unconscious cognition

The unconsciousness of cognition refers to our lack of direct perception of the abstract dimensions in the mind. Through cognition, people have developed concepts and meaning of the world, which must include a series of mental activities such as reasoning, generalization, deduction, monitoring, understanding and memory [4]. However, these complex mental activities are not perceived by us. Similarly, language learning process is unconscious as well.

2.3 The metaphorical nature of thinking

People need to express spiritual phenomena with the help of feeling phenomena, in this sense, metaphor is made. Metaphor here is the product of projecting visual experience, hearing experience and experience of other related fields to the spiritual field. Metaphor is quite common in the study of human language and culture. Metaphors always exist in the details of our lives, which are experiential, unconscious or automatic and highly effective.

3. Experiential Learning and its Characteristics

Kolb, on the basis of other scholars' researches, held that 'learning is experiencing'[2]. The term 'experiential learning' defines it as a particular form of learning from life experience[5].

Experiential learning is a way to gain new knowledge, skills and attitude through cognitive experience and perception through the practice of experiential learning. Experience learning as a practical activity in which the body and mind of the experience subject interact with the external world and generate reflection awareness. Experience is the reflection of self-existence, experience is the perspective and evaluation of its existence and its process. There is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education [6].

Learners are stressed in the Experiential learning theory. Experiential learning theory emphasizes that the learners experience and gain knowledge in the specific social and cultural environment. Experiential learning attaches more importance to the active relationship between experience and experience in the learning process. It is no longer a result-oriented passive information learning, in experiential learning, students' life importance is highlighted and extended.

3.1 Experiential learning focuses on students' uniqueness

Experiential teaching pays attention to the uniqueness of students and everyone has their own unique personality and spiritual world, as well as students. Experiential learning focuses on the uniqueness of students and achieves success through experiential interaction and experiences the pleasure of learning.

3.2 Experiential learning focuses on the generative nature of language cognition of students

From the perspective of philosophy, human development is innovative and transcendental, so the process of language acquisition is unfinished and uncertain. Experiential learning conforms to the law of scientific development, and places learners in the constant development and changes [7]. Each learner has a different learning experience at different stages of learning, and the process of experiencing language is part of the process of life growth.

3.3 Experiential learning focuses on learning autonomy of students

Experiential learning inspires students' thirst for knowledge and desire of innovation, it automatically stimulates learners to acquire knowledge, know themselves, improve themselves, improve their ability of autonomous learning in learning process. In this process, learners experience learning while they continuously surpass themselves as well. Experiential learning focuses on the initiative of learners' participation. Learners interest will be stimulated, maintained

and enhanced and they would be able to obtain the power to move ahead unless they learn happily in learning.

3.4 Experiential learning focuses on emotional experience of learners

The experience result is the generation of emotion [8]. In the process of experience, the subject will be involved in it, and positive attitude toward life will be developed as well. Learners' enjoyment and sense of fulfillment will be highlighted and respected.

4. Experiential philosophy and EPBs reading

EPBs reading has become an important way for children to learn English. EPBs are characterized by refined language, vivid pictures and plots, rich cultural background knowledge and education of the spiritual level, which attract children's readers. EPBs cover a wide range of subjects, including cognition, personality and life. They interact directly with readers in a diversified way. EPBs provide learners an imaginative space and bring them the pleasure of reading. In addition, English picture books are dynamic and social as language.

4.1 Mental experience and EPBs reading

Language learning is accomplished through experience by learners. Experiential philosophy is better presented EPBs reading. Effective picture reading enables learners to acquire experience, perceive information, process information, and immerse in language learning [9]. Picture books are illustrated and cover various themes of life, which attract learners' interest easily. With the help of pictures, learners experience the plots and deep meaning through understanding, generation, summarization, reasoning. Learners' language systems are constructed unconsciously in this process. Learners perceive information, understand information and process information. This process is the real process of mental experience.

4.2 Unconscious cognitive and EPBs reading

Language learning and cognitive activities are connected with neurotic operation of thinking, the result of thinking also needs the operation of the nervous system and the language to express [10]. In language activities, any simple activity could not be perceived by human beings even though the process is so complex. The unconsciousness of cognition determines language is acquired unconsciously. While learners are immersed in EPBs, they're exposed to a particular language atmosphere, any activity language acquisition process is accomplished without awareness, so does language acquisition.

4.3 Metaphoric nature and EPBs reading

Man knows the world from experiencing themselves. This process is realized through thinking and functioning based on the existing experience. Human cognitive system is a system of metaphorical structure: In order to know and understand the world deeply around us, people instinctively seek the similarities between different concepts, metaphors are created and language is developed in this way. Language acquisition shares this similarity in this sense. The learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. With the help of metaphor, people can perceive and experience new knowledge by looking for similarities between old and new knowledge. Through the reading and learning of picture books, learners consolidate the old knowledge through experience, and acquire new knowledge, new perception and new experience through metaphors.

5. Suggestions for Reading EPBs

5.1 EPBs should be native

The best learning fruit could be achieved in its real cultural background. The original EPBs offer learners with an intangible, three-dimensional, intuitive and specific English social and cultural background, which is more conducive to learners' direct perception and mastery of knowledge.

5.2 EPBs should be appropriate

Cognitive theory emphasizes meaningful and comprehensible learning. Krashen proposed that input (what will be heard and seen by the learners), should be slightly higher than the current level of the learners, in this sense, the input could be achieved the best [11]. Only when the input level is 'i + 1', can learners develop positive learning attitude and inner power to study. Appropriate EPBs may enable learners develop their drive of knowledge learning on the basis of self-confidence.

5.3 Guide reading of EPBs should be appropriate

Learners have great differences in their emotional and abilities of language expression, guide reading is required here. Wise guide reading should assist learners to have better understanding on the background and the author's intention and to arrange vocabulary to express their inner feelings more clearly. The ideal guide reading should be conducted in the interactive circumstance, as well.

5.4 EPBs reading should be extensible

When a book is completed, learning assistant could link this book to any other book which shares similarities in subject, background, plots, language style and personal character, etc. Through comparison, generalization and summarizing, learners could acquire more language knowledge and emotional experiences.

5.5 EPBs reading should be innovative

Innovative approaches are required in EPBs reading to enable learners accept new experience through experience and perception, simultaneously, the acquired new stuff should be connected with what the learners learned before, in this sense, could innovative learning and application be realized. Approaches, such as plots drawing or handmade activities, could be adopted due to learners of age difference [12].

6. Conclusion

EPBs reading is the best practice of experiential learning for young English learners. For them, English picture books offer the best practice of experiential learning. Through various activities, learners could complete concepts, reasoning, analysis, judgment and a series of sensory experience activities in relaxed atmosphere and in particular English culture background. Under this condition, learners' language knowledge, cultural knowledge and emotional experience are enhanced in many aspects, this is the advantage of English picture books.

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