

The Innovative Application of Output-oriented Method (POA) in Argumentative Teaching for English Majors and Its Influence on Students' Critical Thinking Ability

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ABSTRACT

Based on the in-depth analysis of debate courses for college English majors, this study, by combining theory and practice, studies that debate teaching can significantly improve students' classroom participation and independent learning ability, and effectively cultivate students' critical thinking ability while improving their comprehensive skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Under the framework of POA, the driving and facilitating links in the teaching process play a key role in English debate teaching and promote the development of students' comprehensive ability. In this process, teachers play multiple roles as guides, organizers and activity designers, and guide students to gradually transition from basic thinking to deep thinking through various teaching strategies such as debate, brainstorming and Socratic questioning. However, the effect of evaluation in POA teaching process is relatively not outstanding in promoting students' critical thinking ability, and the evaluation mechanism needs to be further optimized. The argumentative teaching mode based on POA provides an effective way for college English teaching, which improves students' comprehensive language skills and significantly enhances their critical thinking ability, and provides strong support for the realization of the goal of training well-developed talents in higher education.

KEYWORDS

Production-oriented approach; Critical thinking ability; Debate teaching; English major; English teaching

1 Introduction

In the context of globalization, English, as an international language, has become increasingly important. With the increasingly frequent exchanges and cooperation between countries, English plays an increasingly important role in international affairs, scientific and technological exchanges, cultural communication and other fields. In the stage of higher education, English teaching should not only improve students' language skills, but also cultivate their critical thinking ability to adapt to the needs of the development of globalization. However, the traditional English teaching mode often focuses on the accumulation of basic language knowledge and skill training, ignoring the cultivation of critical thinking ability. To a large extent, this mode leads to the problems that students often show empty content, lack of depth and low intention in writing and expression, which is difficult to meet the needs of high-level communication. Although students have a solid grasp of grammar and vocabulary, they lack the ability of independent thinking and critical analysis in the face of complex problems, which seriously restricts their academic and career development.

With the continuous renewal of educational concepts, cultivating students' critical thinking and innovative ability has become an important goal of higher education. Critical thinking is not only the core ability of individuals in academic research, but also an important basis for solving practical problems and making reasonable decisions. Innovation ability is the key to promote social progress and scientific and technological development. Therefore, modern education pays more and more attention to the cultivation of critical thinking ability, and regards it as one of the important contents of educational reform. The College English Teaching Guide (2020 edition) clearly points out that the training of students' critical thinking ability should be included in the teaching objectives of college English teaching. This guide provides an important basis for the reform of English teaching and points out the direction of future development. The guideline requires that English teaching should not only focus on the transfer of language knowledge, but also stimulate students' critical thinking and creativity through various teaching activities and methods. For example, through the form of debate, discussion, case analysis, etc., to cultivate students' ability of independent thinking, logical reasoning and comprehensive analysis^[1].

2 Correlation Theory

2.1 Overview of POA Theory

Production-oriented Approach (POA), proposed by Chinese scholar Professor Qiufang Wen in 2015, is a teaching theory that focuses on improving students' language Production ability. POA theory originates from a profound reflection on the current situation of foreign language teaching in China, aiming to solve the problem of "heavy input, light output" in traditional teaching mode, emphasizing that students' language learning is driven by real tasks, and realizing the simultaneous improvement of language ability and critical thinking ability^[2].

The core concept of POA theory can be summarized as "driving, promoting and evaluating" three links, these three links are interrelated, together constitute a complete teaching process. At the same time, POA theory has obvious advantages such as emphasizing practical application, paying attention to students' main body, systematic teaching process, and comprehensive ability cultivation^[3].

2.2 Argumentative Approach

Debate teaching method is a kind of teaching method with debate as the core activity, through the highly interactive form of debate to cultivate students' language expression ability, logical thinking ability and critical thinking ability.

The debate teaching method has several remarkable characteristics: First, it is highly interactive. The debate teaching method requires students to actively participate in classroom activities rather than passively accept knowledge. Students need to actively learn and apply what they have learned through the process of collecting information, organizing arguments, and debating with opponents. The second is to exercise language skills comprehensively. The debate teaching method puts forward high requirements for students' comprehensive ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students get comprehensive exercise and improvement through the preparation of debates, during debates, and after debates. The core of the debate teaching method lies in argumentation and refutation, which helps students exercise their critical thinking ability. The fourth is to promote independent learning. Students need to collect and analyze data independently to cultivate their independent learning and research ability^[4].

3 Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, that is, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. This paper aims to comprehensively evaluate the effect of Production-Oriented Approach (POA) on debate teaching for English majors and its influence on students' critical thinking ability. The research Design includes the following key steps: First, Pre-test and Post-test Design. The research adopts Pre-test and Post-test design to conduct pre-test on students before the debate course begins. Assess their initial level of comprehensive English skills and critical thinking ability. The content of the pre-test includes the comprehensive skills test of listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as the questionnaire and case analysis of critical thinking ability. After the end of the course, the post test was conducted, and the same test tools and methods were used to compare the changes in the test scores before and after. Through statistical analysis methods such as Independent Samples t-test, the effect of POA debate teaching was quantified to ensure the statistical significance and reliability of the results. The second is the Control Variable Method. The control variable method is introduced into the research design to control other variables that may affect the teaching effect by setting the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group adopted the POA debate teaching mode, while the control group adopted the traditional teaching mode. The two groups of students were matched in terms of gender, age, language foundation, learning motivation, etc., to ensure that the differences between the groups were minimized, so that the teaching mode became the main variable affecting the results. The application of control variable method improved the Internal Validity of the research results and enhanced the credibility of the conclusions. Third, the embedded design embedded the collection and analysis of qualitative data in the process of quantitative data collection, in order to obtain a more comprehensive research perspective and deep understanding. In addition to quantitative data collection, classroom observation, student interviews and teacher interviews are used to obtain more background information and students' learning experience. Classroom observation records students' performance in the debate process, including participation, interaction and critical thinking ability. Students were interviewed to gain insight into their feelings, challenges and gains from the debate course, while teachers were interviewed to provide feedback and suggestions on the implementation of the teaching process^[5].

3.2 Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through Pre-test and Post-test and Questionnaire Survey. Standardized test questions were used to evaluate students' listening, speaking, reading and writing comprehensive skills and critical thinking ability. Questionnaires on classroom participation, independent learning ability and critical thinking ability were designed and distributed to assess students' feelings and experience on debate teaching from multiple dimensions. Then, the qualitative data collection methods of Classroom Observation and Student Interviews are adopted. Students' performance in the debate course was recorded through non-participatory observation, focusing on students' interaction, participation, and demonstration of critical thinking ability. At the same time, Semi-structured Interviews were conducted with some students in the experimental group to understand students' feedback and suggestions on debate teaching. The contents of the interview include students' views on teaching methods, the improvement of their critical thinking ability, and the challenges and difficulties encountered.

3.3 The Importance of the Teacher's Role

In the POA debate teaching model, the role of teachers is crucial. Teachers are not only the imparts of knowledge, but also the guides, organizers and activity designers of students' learning process. These multiple roles are particularly critical in the driving and enabling stages, helping to stimulate students' motivation, enhance their comprehensive skills, and promote the development of their critical thinking ability.

As facilitators, in the driving session, teachers stimulate students' motivation and interest in learning by designing realistic and challenging debate tasks. Authentic Task Context is one of the core concepts of POA. By combining learning tasks with real life situations, students can feel the realistic significance and application value of learning. In this process, teachers guide students to deep thinking and preparation by providing background knowledge, setting debate topics and clarifying task requirements. Classroom observation and qualitative data analysis show that teachers' guiding role in the driving process directly affects students' participation and enthusiasm. Teachers use Provocative Questions and discussions to encourage students to think positively and express their views, thereby effectively improving the depth and breadth of their thinking.

As an organizer, teachers play a particularly prominent role in facilitating the process. Through reasonable classroom organization and management, teachers ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in debate activities and play their strengths in team work. Collaborative Learning is an important part of POA, and through group discussions, role playing, and teamwork, students are able to learn through interaction and improve their language skills and teamwork skills. By observing and evaluating each student's participation, teachers provide timely feedback and guidance to help students overcome difficulties in learning. This Immediate Feedback mechanism can effectively promote the learning process of students, so that they can gradually improve in the continuous revision and improvement.

As an activity designer, teachers also play the role of activity designer in POA teaching mode. By designing diversified teaching activities, such as debate, Brainstorming, Socratic Questioning, etc., teachers can guide students to gradually transition from basic thinking to deep thinking. Teaching strategies such as brainstorming and Socratic questioning are designed to promote Critical and Creative Thinking in students through open questions and guided discussions. Teachers need to carefully design each teaching link to ensure the level and progressiveness of activities, so that students can gradually improve their thinking ability in the process of gradual learning. By designing challenging tasks, teachers can stimulate students' thinking potential and guide them to conduct in-depth analysis and discussion, thus effectively developing their Logical Reasoning and Argumentation Skills.

3.4 Data Analysis

Through quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis, Descriptive Statistics Independent Samples t-test Thematic Analysis and Content analysis were used Analysis) to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistical analysis refers to the basic statistical description of questionnaire survey data, including mean value, standard difference and other indicators, to outline the overall performance of students in various abilities. The independent sample T-test is to compare the scores of the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test and post-test, and evaluate the effectiveness of the POA debate teaching mode. Topic analysis is to encode the topic of interview data, extract the key themes and common viewpoints of students in the course experience, and reveal the specific impact of debate teaching on the cultivation of critical thinking ability. The content analysis rule is to systematically analyze the classroom observation records, identify students' language application ability and critical thinking level in the process of debate,

and form a comprehensive evaluation of the teaching effect.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 The Influence of Argumentative Teaching on Students' Critical Thinking Ability

As a highly interactive teaching method, argumentative teaching has a remarkable effect on improving students' critical thinking ability. Under the framework of Production-Oriented Approach (POA), debate teaching guides students to think and express deeply in a real language environment through a series of well-designed teaching activities and tasks, and effectively cultivates their critical thinking ability^[6]. The first is that argumentative teaching stimulates students' critical thinking by setting up debate topics and group discussions. During the debate, students are expected to conduct in-depth research on the assigned position, gathering and analyzing a large amount of relevant data to form strong arguments and arguments. This process not only exercises the students' information processing ability, but also encourages them to think comprehensively and deeply about the problem, and cultivates their analysis and judgment ability. Second, argumentative teaching promotes the development of students' logical thinking ability through the training of argumentation and refutation. In a debate, students must not only state their own opinions, but also refute the other side's arguments through logical reasoning and evidence support. This process requires students to have clear logical thinking and quick reaction skills in order to effectively deal with various challenges during the debate process. Third, the argumentative teaching further deepens the students' critical thinking ability through the teacher's guidance and the application of various teaching strategies.

4.2 Driving and Facilitating Link under POA Framework

POA framework emphasizes three aspects in the teaching process: driving, facilitating and evaluating. By setting specific debate tasks and guiding students to discuss around a certain topic, the driving part stimulates students' interest in learning and makes them realize the value of debate for practical language application, thus enhancing their learning motivation. Teachers support and guide students to accomplish tasks in a variety of ways. One is debate. Through debate practice, students exercise their language expression and thinking ability in real situations. The second is brainstorming. Through group discussion, students can inspire each other and stimulate more ideas and ideas. The third is Socratic questioning. Through teachers' guided questioning, students are encouraged to think deeply and reflect on themselves, so as to improve their logical thinking and argumentation ability.

4.3 The Optimization Suggestion of Evaluation Link

Although the argumentative teaching under the POA framework is excellent in improving students' critical thinking ability, it is also found that there are shortcomings in the evaluation process. The existing evaluation mechanism mainly focuses on the accuracy of language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, and ignores the comprehensive assessment of students' critical thinking ability. Therefore, there are the following suggestions: First, multi-dimensional evaluation, the establishment of a comprehensive evaluation system including language accuracy, logical rigor, depth of argument and innovation. This can more comprehensively reflect the actual performance of students in the debate process and the improvement of critical thinking ability. The second is the process evaluation, which increases the observation and record of students'

participation in all aspects of the debate, pays attention to students' performance in the preparation, discussion and summary stages, so as to assess their ability development more comprehensively^[7]. Third, the combination of self-assessment and mutual assessment encourages students to conduct self-evaluation and peer evaluation, and further promotes students' learning and critical thinking ability through self-reflection and mutual feedback^[8].

5 Conclusion

This paper studies the significant effect of Production-Oriented Approach (POA) on improving the comprehensive English skills and critical thinking ability of college English majors. Through the teaching mode of "debate + speculation", the three links of driving, promoting and evaluating POA effectively improve students' classroom participation, independent learning ability and comprehensive skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The driving part stimulates students' learning motivation through real debate tasks, while the enabling part develops students' logical and critical thinking through teacher guidance and a variety of teaching strategies such as debating, brainstorming, and Socratic questioning. The evaluation process is not effective in promoting critical thinking ability, so it is necessary to optimize the evaluation mechanism and increase the evaluation of logical thinking and innovative thinking. POA's argumentative teaching model provides an effective way for college English teaching, significantly improves students' comprehensive language skills and critical thinking ability, and provides strong support for higher education to cultivate well-rounded talents.

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