Study on the Optimization of the Teaching Effect of University English based on the Output-oriented Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to test the optimization of the teaching effect of the "Output-oriented approach" on the teaching effect of university English based on the "Output-oriented approach" through teaching practice. The study found that: 1. The study found that: 1. after comparing the results of the experimental class and the control class, it was found that the results of the experimental class were slightly higher than those of the control class, and the difference was gradually increasing; 2. the investigation of the teaching effect found that the mean values of the experimental class were relatively higher, and by the third semester the experimental class exceeded the control class in all scores. The "Output-oriented method" provides an alternative perspective for reform to improve the effectiveness of university English teaching.

Keywords

Output-oriented Approach; College English; Teaching Optimization.

1. Background

At present, the phenomenon of "separation between learning and use" and "dumb English" in the teaching of English in China's applied undergraduate universities is becoming increasingly serious. The traditional teaching of English at university level in China usually starts from the textbook as a whole, guiding students to understand the structure of the text and the main messages it conveys. The teaching of a new text includes "warming up", quick reading, analysis of the structure of the text, sorting out the theme, analysis of language difficulties and appreciation of writing skills. There is a lot of teacher-student or student-student interaction in the classroom, but this interaction rarely provides opportunities for students to express their language coherently. At the end of the text strand, a variety of exercises are completed one by one at the end of the text. In this approach, teachers usually focus on teaching the text as the goal of classroom instruction rather than on developing students' ability to use English in an integrated way. Particularly in the current context of limited classroom time, many teachers report that the content of the textbook has just been processed, and in some cases it is too late to teach it before they have to move on to a new unit of study, which simply does not free up time to develop students' output skills. In addition, in terms of students' attitudes to learning, most students feel fearful and have a negative attitude towards learning English, believing that it is difficult to learn English, lacking confidence in themselves and feeling helpless to begin.

In response to the poor results of university English courses for applied undergraduates, the "separation of learning and use" in teaching, and the widespread phenomenon of "dumb English" among students, the Beihai Campus of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of Guilin is determined to reform university English. Based on Professor Wen Qiufang's Output-oriented approach, Beihai Campus will conduct a study on optimising the effectiveness of university English teaching, taking into account the National Guidelines for Teaching University English (MOE, 2017), the Chinese English Proficiency Scale (MOE, 2018) and the reality of our applied undergraduate students.

2. Reform Content

(1) Reform of teaching process

Based on the theoretical system of "Output-oriented method", the teaching concept of "input-oriented and Output-oriented" will be changed, and the teaching process will be composed of drive-facilitate-evaluation,. With the successful completion of several drive-facilitate-evaluation cycles, the corresponding small output goals will be achieved one after another, and the final large output goals will be achieved.

Step 1: Drive. Before the teaching activity begins, the teacher identifies each theme of teaching. For each theme, the teacher first presents communicative scenarios and output tasks; students try to complete the output tasks so that they can realize their own language deficiencies and develop the desire to learn; the teacher explains the teaching objectives and output tasks so that students are clear about both communicative and linguistic objectives, the types and contents of output tasks, and the time and form of completing the tasks.

Step 2: Implementation facilitation. The teacher explains the output tasks by items, so that students clearly understand the steps to complete the output tasks and the specific requirements of each step; the teacher provides learning materials, and students learn selectively according to the output objectives, and the teacher gives guidance and checks; students practice the output and try to apply the selective learning results to the output tasks, and the teacher gives guidance and checks.

Step 3:evaluation. The teacher formulates evaluation criteria, and teachers and students study the evaluation criteria together to ensure that they are clear and easy to understand; students submit output results for a combination of self-assessment, peer evaluation and teacher evaluation, and a combination of immediate and delayed evaluation.

(2) Teaching mode reform

The teaching mode of college English under the guidance of "Output-oriented method" theory should make full use of the advantages of combining online and offline teaching in the information technology era, take the principle of practical and sufficient use as the principle, highlight the dominant position of language output, and pay attention to the cultivation and improvement of students' language application ability and comprehensive quality.

(3) Reform of teaching methods

In today's era of rapid development of science and technology and big data, the teaching methods of college English need to be further expanded and extended. In the process of teaching reform, teachers should make comprehensive use of traditional teaching methods and modern teaching methods, and try to use some new teaching methods closely related to the development of big data era and network information technology, such as micro-classes, teaching APP, online courses, various teaching platforms, etc. to teach English in college.

(4) Reform of teaching materials and teaching contents

With the advent of informationization and the era of big data, the learning method of "intensive reading" and "detailed reading" of limited learning materials can no longer meet the needs of students. The teaching content can no longer be limited to the textbook, but students must be exposed to a large number of input materials from life, from the actual job and expand their knowledge to keep up with the pace of the times. The "Output-oriented" teaching concept "whole-person education" points out that foreign language courses should not only achieve the instrumental goal of improving students' comprehensive English language skills, but also the humanistic goal of higher education, such as improving students' critical thinking skills, independent learning ability and comprehensive cultural literacy. (Wen, 2015), which is consistent with the positioning of the nature of college English courses in the Guide to Teaching College English (2017), that is, college English courses are both instrumental and humanistic in

nature. In addition, according to the output tasks, the content that teachers need to provide for students' optional learning should include the content required for the output, the form of language expression, and the structure of the discourse. The amount of optional learning resources available in the context of big data is very large, and teachers need to extract the valuable parts of the information in a targeted manner for integration and then provide them to students for learning.

(5) Reform of assessment and evaluation methods

The assessment of college English is a combination of formative and summative assessment, with more weight given to the usual assessment and more emphasis on students' performance in and out of class and the quality of their output.

College English assessment is done through collaborative teacher-student assessment. The "teacher-student cooperative evaluation" includes three stages: before, during and after class. Before class, teachers select and review typical samples according to the unit's teaching objectives. During the lesson, students think independently first, then communicate in pairs/groups, and then have a large class discussion led by the teacher, who gives comments prepared before the lesson. At the end of the lesson, based on the teacher's professional guidance, students supplemented the "teacher-student collaborative assessment" with self-assessment or peer assessment. In order to familiarize students with the collaborative assessment process and how to do it, teachers will distribute the assessment scales and train students on collaborative assessment prior to conducting the assessment. Only after the training is completed will students begin the formal implementation phase of teacher-student collaborative assessment.

3. Teaching Implementation

(1) Research Subjects

This study was conducted with the freshman students of the 19th grade of non-English majors in the applied undergraduate program of Beihai Campus of Guilin University of Electronic Science and Technology as the research subjects. To facilitate the study, the classes taught by the subject members themselves were used as the samples. In the first semester, there was one experimental class and one control class with a total of 133 students; in the second semester, two experimental classes and one control class were added on the basis of the original study classes, making a total of 6 classes (3 experimental classes and 3 control classes) with a total of 381 students; in the third semester, the study classes and numbers were the same as in the second semester. The experimental classes were taught by the "Output-oriented method" and the evaluation model, while the control classes were taught by the traditional model.

(2) Research Methodology and Data Collection

The experimental classes followed the "Output-oriented" teaching process of "drive-facilitate-evaluate", while the control classes still used the traditional teaching mode.

In order to record the implementation of the "Output-oriented method" in the college English classroom, the group will collect the following data: 1) photos of teachers' classroom teaching and students' presentations; 2) students' speaking and writing output materials; 3) tables of students' final exam results (including listening, speaking, reading and writing, depending on the content of each semester's test) for three semesters in the experimental and control classes; 4) statistics of teachers' and students' cooperative evaluation and teaching effectiveness surveys.

After the data were collected, the subject group conducted statistical analysis separately to guide the next stage of teaching implementation as well as to form the final summary report.

(3) Teaching arrangement

From September 2019 to December 2020, a one-and-a-half-year (3 semesters) empirical study on teaching and learning will be conducted for 2019 freshmen students of Beihai Campus of Guilin University of Electronic Science and Technology through experimental classes and control classes (non-experimental classes). During the study, we will continue to optimize the teaching mode and teaching methods, analyze and summarize the problems in teaching, and summarize and improve the "output-based" teaching mode and teacher-student evaluation mode that focus on improving students' English application and cross-cultural communication skills according to the specific implementation.

The experiment lasts for 12 weeks each semester, with 4 hours per week, totaling 48 hours, and is organized around specific teaching units for each semester. The teaching design of each unit is the same, but the specific output tasks and corresponding evaluation criteria vary according to the theme and task form of each unit, for example, different evaluation criteria are used for oral output and written output.

(4) Demonstration and appreciation of teaching practices

In order to enhance students' interest and strengthen their English application skills, different teaching practice and appreciation activities are held each semester.

In the first semester, "Introduction to English-speaking Countries" is planned and carried out for intercultural communication, so that students can learn about the culture, geography, history, economy and politics of major English-speaking countries, as well as the cultural traditions, customs and other related situations of social life in major English-speaking countries, and enhance students' motivation to learn English.

In the second semester, workplace activities are planned and implemented according to the characteristics of applied undergraduate programs. Each group member is asked to incorporate workplace topics and shoot videos according to the characteristics of the school and his or her major. Students enhance their understanding and application of vocational English by however improving the video content and video shooting.

In the third semester, in conjunction with the Level 4 exam, an activity is organized to introduce and explain to students about everyday or familiar topics, such as traditional Chinese festivals and environmental protection. Students work in groups to collect and study new materials online and edit texts; teachers give targeted feedback on their texts, and students use the texts as the basis for presenting and appreciating the results in the form of oral output.

4. Results of Teaching Reform Implementation

After a year-and-a-half-long (September 2019-December 2020) comparative study and analysis of the teaching reform for a total of 381 students in the experimental and control classes, the following sets of data were obtained.

(a) In the three semesters, whether the teaching combinations of listening, dictation, reading and speaking or reading and writing, after the comparative analysis of the results of the experimental and control classes, it was found that the experimental class was slightly higher than the control class, and the gap was gradually increasing, and there was even a significant difference in the results of speaking and writing in the latter times, as shown in Table 1.

The statistics of teacher-student cooperation found that the third semester of teacher-student cooperation evaluation was done better than the first two semesters. Students basically have adapted to the specific process and method of teacher-student cooperation evaluation and appreciated the importance of teacher-student cooperation evaluation. Some students, after training, were able to grasp the grading points better and understand the direction of speaking and writing improvement from them, so they would do self-evaluation and peer evaluation

more seriously and carefully than in the first two semesters, which was reflected in more self-evaluation and peer evaluation being closer to the teacher's grading.

Table 1. Comparison table of grades by semester

Semester 1							
Class	Number	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Average Score	Listening (out of 30)	Reading (out of 35)	Translation (out of 15)	Speaking (out of 20)
Experimental class	66	80	29	56.96	16.30	19.04	7.40	14.23
Control class	67	80.5	35.5	56.55	17.04	19.14	5.71	14.66

Semester 2							
Class	Number	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Average Score	Listening (out of 30)	Reading (out of 20)	Translation (out of 35)	Speaking (out of 15)
Experimental class	189	97	37	73.75	25.07	12.06	23.65	11.92
Control class	192	96	30	68.16	24.03	10.99	21.28	11.90

Semester 3							
Class	Number	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Average Score	Listening (out of 20)	Reading (out of 35)	Translation (out of 25)	Speaking (out of 20)
Experimental class	189	95	29	65.82	15.42	22.12	12.93	15.80
Control class	192	92	25	62.71	14.68	20.54	11.70	15.76

(b) After three semesters of teaching effect survey, it was found that the mean values of all the experimental classes were relatively high, and by the third semester the experimental classes exceeded the control classes in all scores, especially the three indicators that were conducive to teacher-student/student-student communication, teaching content learning and use as a whole, and teaching mode conducive to strengthening the use of language items were relatively high in the experimental classes, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean values of teaching effectiveness survey

Topic dimension	Topic content	Mean of experimental class	Mean of control class
Teaching mode	Teaching mode is conducive to promoting speaking and writing output	4.53	4.46
	Teaching mode is conducive to promoting independent learning	4.50	4.42
	Facilitates teacher-student/student-student communication	4.60	4.46
Teaching content	Integrated learning and use	4.57	4.44
Effectiveness of the teaching	conducive to enhancing the ability to analyze	4.57	4.47
	Teaching mode conducive to enhanced use of language items	4.56	4.47

The above data show that the "Output-oriented" teaching and evaluation mode of college English has its advantages and teaching optimization effects compared with the traditional teaching mode. Through the three links of driving, facilitating and evaluating, it can help applied undergraduates realize their own shortcomings, target the output and improve the output through teacher-student evaluation, so as to finally achieve the purpose of optimizing the teaching effect and improving students' English proficiency.

5. Implications for Teaching Practice

The reform of college English teaching based on "Output-oriented method" attaches importance to the reform of college English learning and teaching methods, and changes the traditional "input" first and "output" later to "output" first. The "output" is followed by "input", and the "learning and use" is emphasized, which can greatly optimize the teaching effect. English output is speaking and writing, and students are eager to improve their skills. In the initial stage of the new students, we provide guidance on how to learn English in college, increase the efforts to promote the "Output-oriented method", guide students to make full use of the resources platform of college English, and ensure that students are placed in a good English atmosphere in the classroom. At the same time, teacher education and teaching capacity development are key aspects of the teaching reform. In terms of teaching, teachers should be trained to use the "Output-oriented method" to create an output-driven English classroom environment; to advocate an evaluation system based on teacher-student cooperation, so that students can change from "I want to learn" to "I want to learn "At the same time, we make full use of modern educational technology to create multimodal cross-cultural communication scenarios and workplace environments in the classroom, so that the "Output-oriented approach" can be implemented in a more authentic English environment.

Acknowledgments

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