

A Discussion on the Improvement of Senior High School Students' English Language Competence

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Abstract: English language competence serves as the core of senior high school English core literacy, covering four basic dimensions: listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as comprehensive abilities such as pragmatic application, logical thinking and cross-cultural cognition. Senior high school is a critical stage for the systematic shaping and comprehensive upgrading of students' English language ability, which lays a solid foundation for students' college English learning and future international communication. In the context of the new curriculum reform, senior high school English teaching has shifted from single knowledge indoctrination to competency-oriented cultivation, yet many middle schools still face prominent problems in practical teaching. The disconnection between input and output, the imbalance of skill training, the lack of situational teaching and rigid evaluation mechanisms have restricted the sustainable improvement of students' comprehensive language competence. Based on the connotation of senior high school English language competence and the requirements of the new curriculum standard, this paper analyzes the current dilemmas of students' English language ability development, explores targeted teaching optimization strategies from the perspectives of balanced skill training, situational teaching innovation, learning method guidance and diversified evaluation, and summarizes the internal logic of language ability improvement. The research aims to provide practical and feasible teaching references for front-line senior high school English teachers, promote the overall improvement of students' comprehensive English language competence, and realize the fundamental goal of English subject literacy cultivation.

Keywords: senior high school English; language competence; teaching optimization; core literacy; ability training

1. Introduction

English language ability is not a simple superposition of knowledge and skills, but a comprehensive ability system formed by the organic integration of language input, output, cognition and application. To effectively improve senior high school students' English language competence, it is necessary to break the limitations of traditional exam-oriented teaching, follow the internal laws of second language acquisition, build a scientific and systematic teaching system, realize the balanced development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and promote the transformation from passive knowledge reception to active language application. Based on the current situation of senior high school English teaching, this paper analyzes the restrictive factors of students' language ability improvement, and puts forward targeted optimization strategies, so as to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the high-quality development of senior high school English teaching.

2. Current Dilemmas and Restrictive Factors of Senior High School Students' English Language Competence Development

2.1 Unbalanced Development of Language Skills and Disconnected Input and Output

The most prominent problem in the current development of senior high school students' English language competence is the serious imbalance of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Restricted by the college entrance examination orientation, senior high school English teaching has long formed a teaching tendency of "valuing reading and writing, ignoring listening and speaking". Reading and writing scores account for a large proportion in the college entrance examination, so teachers invest a lot of classroom time and after-class tutoring in explaining reading comprehension skills, analyzing writing templates and training test-taking abilities. In contrast, listening teaching is limited to periodic examination training, and oral teaching is basically absent in daily classroom teaching.

2.2 Rigid Teaching Mode and Lack of Real Situational Experience

Language learning is situational and practical, and the generation of language ability must be based on real language context and practical communication activities. At present, most senior high school English classrooms still adopt the traditional teacher-centered indoctrination teaching mode. The classroom teaching process is dominated by knowledge explanation and exercise training, lacking real communicative situations and interactive experience links. Teachers take knowledge teaching as the core goal, and students passively ac-

cept knowledge points, memorize grammar rules and complete exercises, with low classroom participation and insufficient autonomous participation.

2.3 Backward Learning Methods and Imperfect Evaluation Mechanism

Scientific learning methods are the key to the continuous improvement of language ability, but most senior high school students still adopt mechanical learning methods. In vocabulary learning, students rely on rote memorization, lacking the ability to accumulate and memorize vocabulary combined with context and discourse; in grammar learning, they mechanically memorize rules, unable to flexibly apply grammar knowledge to language expression; in reading and writing learning, they rely on rigid templates and problem-solving skills, lacking independent analysis, thinking and innovative creation. This passive and mechanical learning method makes students' language knowledge fragmented and unable to form a systematic language knowledge system, which seriously affects the improvement of comprehensive language ability.

In terms of teaching evaluation, the current senior high school English evaluation system is still dominated by summative evaluation such as monthly examinations, mid-term and final examinations. The evaluation indicators are single, focusing only on written test scores, ignoring the process of students' language learning, situational application ability and autonomous learning progress. The single evaluation orientation makes teachers and students take score improvement as the core goal, ignoring the long-term cultivation of language application ability and literacy. The lack of process evaluation and diversified evaluation makes it impossible to accurately feed back students' language ability defects, and difficult to provide targeted guidance for ability improvement, forming a vicious cycle of "high score and low ability".

3. Optimization Strategies for Improving Senior High School Students' English Language Competence

3.1 Balance Four-Skill Training and Build an Integrated Input-Output Teaching System

To improve students' comprehensive English language competence, the primary task is to reverse the unbalanced teaching tendency of valuing reading and writing over listening and speaking, and build an integrated teaching system of simultaneous development of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers should take the integration of input and output as the core, integrate skill training into daily classroom teaching, and break the fragmented teaching mode of separate skill training. In daily teaching, reading and listening are regarded as language input channels, responsible for helping students accumulate vocabulary, grammar, discourse logic and cultural knowledge; speaking and writing are regarded as language output carriers, realizing the internalization and transformation of input knowledge.

3.2 Innovate Situational Teaching Mode and Strengthen Practical Language Application

Language ability is generated and developed in situational communication practice. Teachers should take situational teaching as the core breakthrough of teaching reform, break the limitation of single textbook teaching, build diversified real language situations close to students' life, study and social hot topics, and let students complete language learning and ability improvement in situational interaction and practical application. In classroom teaching, combined with textbook themes, design situational activities such as role-playing, theme speeches, group debates and situational dialogues, turn indoctrination classrooms into interactive communication classrooms, and stimulate students' initiative of language expression.

At the same time, make full use of digital teaching resources to expand situational teaching scenarios. Teachers can select authentic English videos, news articles, cultural introductions and other materials suitable for senior high school students' cognitive level, build a real language application environment, help students perceive authentic language expression habits and pragmatic rules, and narrow the gap between textbook learning and practical application.

3.3 Optimize Learning Guidance and Improve Diversified Whole-Process Evaluation

To solve the problem of students' passive and mechanical learning, teachers should strengthen targeted learning method guidance, help students establish scientific language learning concepts, and form autonomous and efficient learning habits. In vocabulary teaching, guide students to carry out contextual memory and discourse accumulation, master chunk learning methods, and realize flexible vocabulary application; in grammar teaching, combine grammar knowledge with situational expression and discourse analysis, abandon mechanical rule memorization, and let students understand and use grammar in practical language scenes; in reading and writing teaching, cultivate students' independent analysis, logical thinking and innovative expression abilities, reduce template dependence, and improve the autonomy and flexibility of language learning.

In terms of evaluation mechanism, it is necessary to build a diversified whole-process evaluation system combining process evaluation and summative evaluation. Expand evaluation dimensions, not only focusing on written test scores, but also incorporating classroom participation, oral expression, situational communication performance, after-class autonomous learning and practical activity performance into the evaluation scope. Enrich evaluation subjects, realize the combination of teacher evaluation, student mutual evaluation and self-evaluation, and comprehensively and objectively reflect students' language learning status and ability growth. Scientific evaluation can effectively feed back teaching problems, stimulate students' autonomous learning motivation, guide students to pay attention to the accumulation and application of language ability, and form a benign interactive mechanism of teaching and learning optimization.

4. Conclusion

English language competence is the core foundation of senior high school English core literacy cultivation, and its level directly determines the quality of English teaching and students' comprehensive foreign language literacy. At present, the development of senior high school students' English language competence is restricted by unbalanced skill training, rigid teaching modes, insufficient situational practice and imperfect evaluation mechanisms, resulting in the disconnection between learning and application and the phenomenon of high score and low ability. To effectively solve the above problems and realize the sustainable improvement of students' language ability, senior high school English teaching reform must adhere to the competency-oriented educational concept, break the shackles of traditional exam-oriented teaching.

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