

The Application of Teachers' Talk in College English Classroom

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Abstract: Discourse analysis is a linguistic analysis of a language segment that is longer than a sentence to find a series of discourses with similar contexts and to determine the distribution. Teachers' talk is an important communication medium for college English classes. The success of teachers' talk is directly related to the effectiveness of English teaching. The application of teachers' discourse analysis to college English teaching not only simplifies grammatical structure analysis, but also enhances learners' communication skills and greatly improves students' learning efficiency. Based on Discourse Analysis Theory and Comprehensible Input Hypothesis of Krashen, this paper analyzes the current situation of teachers' talk in college English classroom and probes the factors that influence teachers' talk, and provides some teaching implications to better instruct the latter English teaching.

1. Introduction

Teachers' talk in the classroom has become an important research topic in the field of linguistics, and many scholars have carried out a great number of empirical studies on teachers' talk in the English classroom. Classroom is an important environment for language learning, in which communication between teachers and students makes the whole English teaching classroom become vitality. Teachers' talk plays a vital role in promoting positive classroom communication. In English teaching, teacher's talk is not only a medium language for teacher's teaching implementation, but also a target language for students' learning. Therefore, the true and accurate teacher's classroom discourse will have a positive impact on the learner's language output and the development of communicative competence. In the English classroom, the teacher's classroom discourse is on the one hand the medium for teachers to organize classroom teaching. On the other hand, it is also an important source for comprehensible input in students' English learning. Therefore, this paper analyzes the current situation of teachers' talk in college English classroom and probes the factors that influence teachers' talk, and provides some teaching implications to better instruct the latter English teaching, which not only helps to improve the quality of teachers' classroom discourse, but also improves the efficiency of classroom teaching. It can also provide a large amount of comprehensible target input for students' language learning and promote second language acquisition of learners.

2. Theories Analysis

2.1 Discourse Analysis

In everyday life, we do not produce one sentence at a time, rarely in speech, much less in writing. On the contrary, we often produce several sentences at a time, which form a larger coherent whole. Apart from some slogans, language below and just at the sentence level seldom occurs in real life. For instance, when you accept an interview from a company, you may reply like this: "I will be very happy to attend this interview". Here you have used connected sentence to answer that company. Connected sentence like this are usually called discourse.

The term "discourse" has become common currency in a variety of disciplines so much so that it is frequently left undefined, as if its usage were simply common knowledge. However, in linguistics, there is a classic definition of discourse, that is, discourse is "a unit of language above the sentence or above the clause". And discourse analysis is also called discourse linguistics or text analysis. It is

the study of how sentences in spoken and written language form a larger meaningful unit such as paragraph, conversation, interview, and so on. Besides cohesion, some other topics of discourse analysis include information structure, coherence, discourse makers, conversational analysis.

2.2 Comprehensive Input Theory

Input theory is one of the important theories in second language acquisition put forward by Krashen. It states that “‘acquisition’ takes place as a result of the learner having understood input that is a little beyond the current level of this competence (i.e . the $i + 1$ level). Input that is comprehensible to the learner will automatically be at the the right level.”. In another words, acquisition can be produced only when learners come into contact with "comprehensive language input" and is able to focus on the understanding of meaning or information instead of form. The ideal input should be comprehensible, interesting and relevant with non-grammatical programming and sufficient input. This input does not need to be provided deliberately by teachers. As long as learners understand the input and has enough quantity, the input is automatically obtained.

For Chinese students, Chinese is their mother tongue. The English classroom is the main environment for most students to learn English. Students learn language knowledge and practice English in the classroom. There are very few such opportunities to practice out of the classroom. Students have a great dependence on the input of teachers' talk because of the limited English class time. In this way, the input of teachers' talk is more important. Therefore, in English classroom teaching in China, giving a sufficient amount of language input is a necessary condition for students to carry out language learning and English teachers must provide students with sufficient and understandable verbal input.

3. Current situation of teachers' talk in college English classroom

Teachers' talk includes language adjustment, discourse amount, questioning style and information feedback. The language of the input should be accurate, normative and exemplary. However, many English teachers have low quality of discourse in classroom teaching and the classroom questions are single, and teachers are lack of understanding and operation ability for the effective use of teacher discourse. Current situation of teachers' talk in college English classroom is discussed in the following.

3.1 Discourse power between teachers and students is unbalanced.

In the communication with students, the teacher's dominant position is obvious. The teacher controls the content, methods, participants, etc. of the dialogue when communicating with students, and plays a leading role in terms of the quantity and quality of the discourse and the opportunity for revision. Wang Yinquan (1999) found that in the teacher-centered English classroom teaching in China, teachers' talk often accounts for 70%. There are few opportunities for students to participate in classroom activities and express their opinions. There is a lack of communication between teachers and students, and it is difficult to cultivate students' ability to communicate effectively. It is obvious that there exist some shortcomings of this kind of classroom discourse model.

The investigation and analysis of Zhao Xiaohong (1998) show that the classroom atmosphere is more active in the classroom where the teacher's discourse is relatively less, the students are more focused on lectures, and the communication between teachers and students is more and more. The questions can also be answered quickly by the students with high interests and emotions. However, in the classroom where teachers have more words, there is a lack of communication between teachers and students. Students seem to be mentally weak, their concentration is not concentrated, and the classroom is boring.

3.2 Interaction between students is not positive enough.

Fan Wei (2004) observed that most of the students were passive when communicating with other students. They did not want to speak, or they used the pen to write the discussion and then read it out. The quality of each input was not high enough. If the students are not active enough, even if the

teachers try to create a student-centered learning atmosphere, the effect will not be significant.

3.3 Students have a dependence on teachers.

The traditional teaching method is teacher-oriented, in which the teacher is the disseminator of knowledge, the problem solver, and the students develop a habit of relying on teachers. The words and thoughts in the classroom are carried out according to the teacher's requirements, lacking autonomy.

3.4 Teachers' own ability to speak is limited.

Most of the college English teachers in our country have not lived in the native language of English, and they are lack of the opportunity to communicate with the native speakers of English. Therefore, it is inevitable that English they speak will not be authentic. Some teachers use Chinese as their main language in class, and some use Chinglish. All these have a bad effect on students' acquisition of English.

4. Factors influencing teachers' talk

4.1 Students

The difference in students' English proficiency will inevitably affect the teacher's discourse. Some students have a very good English foundation and are fluent in oral English. They can accurately answer the questions raised by teachers. Therefore, the teachers' words on these students are also positive and praiseworthy. However, some students have a relatively weak English foundation, and even have no knowledge of the phonetic symbols, let alone fluent oral questions to answer the teacher's questions, so the teacher's words are relatively negative.

4.2 Teachers

4.2.1 Teachers' lack of awareness of using teachers' discourse

Some teachers do not pay enough attention to teachers' discourse design, and even ignore the classroom discourse. In the classroom, wherever they think of it, sometimes they are far from the subject of the class, which leads to the incomplete progress of the class. In addition, some teachers misunderstand the teacher's discourse. They believe that the function of the teacher's discourse is to impart knowledge to the students. At the same time, as the owner and imparter of knowledge, they feel that they should be the master of the classroom and have the right to occupy more classroom time.

4.2.2 Teacher's own English level

Native language speakers know how to choose the right words when speaking, but this is not an easy task for Chinese English teachers. At present, most college English teachers have rich teaching experience, but lack of theoretical knowledge such as education and psychology. It is difficult for them to combine practice with theory.

4.2.3 Teacher's personality and teaching concept

Personality has proven to have a great impact on foreign language learning. Studies have shown that extroverted people are more successful in language learning than introverted people. Similarly, the teacher's personality has a subtle influence on the language and behavior of the teacher in the classroom. If a teacher is extroverted, sociable and easygoing, she is more active and talkative and confident. She is willing to be the master of the classroom, instead of the passive listener. If a teacher is acute or impatient, then she will not be able to endure the silence that the students will not respond for a long time. For example, after asking a question, if the student does not give an answer within 5 seconds, they may give the correct answer immediately, or call the next student to answer the question. Teachers with different personalities use different teacher terms. In the teaching process, the extroverted teachers use the relaxed and humorous words to arouse the students'

interest, and the classroom atmosphere is more active, while the introverted teachers basically have no slang in class. The introverted teacher's discourse is also a fixed and mechanical mode. The teachers in the whole class have too many words and the students have too few words. Even if the questions are answered, the enthusiasm is not high, and the classroom atmosphere is relatively dull.

The teacher's teaching concept involves the concept of individual teaching, such as the teacher's teaching attitude, values, teaching expectations, teaching theory and the assumptions of teachers' teaching and learning experience accumulated over time. Without good teaching principles to guide, for example, a teacher who claims that he does not believe in any teaching theory, and he prefers to accumulate experience from his teaching practice, then he can not have a good teacher discourse planning in the classroom. If a teacher thinks he should be the center of the classroom, then he will adopt the traditional teacher-centered approach rather than the communicative approach.

5. Some teaching implications to better instruct the latter English teaching

5.1 Reduce teachers' talk and change the role in college English classes.

Chinese educators have repeatedly proposed the "student-centered" classroom teaching ideas. In the traditional "teacher-centered" second language acquisition class, the learner's comprehensible language input is less, which is not conducive to language acquisition. Corder, a pioneer in applied linguistics research in the UK, pointed out that efficient language teaching should not violate natural processes, but should adapt to it. It should not hinder learning, but should help to learn and promote learning. Students should not adapt to teachers and teaching materials, but teachers and textbooks should be adapted to students. In addition to teaching students' language knowledge, teacher discourse should guide and organize students to actively apply the language knowledge to participate in communication, so that students can use the language they are learning. A good teacher will try their best to extend the student's speaking time and to shorten the teacher's speaking time as much as possible.

5.2 Improve the questioning skills and leave enough time for the students to think.

Language is a process, and asking for answers is a positive way of communication. Therefore, teachers should be proficient in questioning skills in teaching so as to give full play to the role of teacher discourse. Brock suggested that teachers should be trained to increase the number of reference questions, which would encourage students to provide longer sentences and more complex answers to facilitate language acquisition. Steven Walsh suggested that teachers should recognize the importance of teacher discourse to classroom communication, and closed-ended questions and answers should be used sparingly. After the teacher asks questions, the "waiting time" should be increased and enough time should be given to students to think about the problem. When students can't answer the questions, teachers should not replace their thoughts, but should change the way they ask questions to guide students to communicate. Even if students answer wrongly, they should provide positive feedback to students, which can enhance students' self-confidence and help students to improve their interest in learning.

5.3 Adjust the discourse according to the "input" theory to improve the teacher's own oral level.

Krashen's "input" theory holds that people can acquire a foreign language only if they have an understandable input. The understandable input information is expressed as "i+1" by the formula. Among them, "i" indicates the current level of language learners, and "1" indicates language knowledge slightly higher than the learner's current level. If the learner makes a lot of contact with "i+1" during the acquisition process, the learner will acquire the new language knowledge without knowing it while understanding the information. According to this theory, the teachers' discourse should be slightly higher than the student's existing language level, so that students can get as much input as possible to understand the teachers' discourse. In the second language acquisition class, the main source of learner input is teachers' talk, which requires teachers to strengthen their learning

and continuously improve their oral English. In addition, it is necessary to fully understand the actual situation of students in all aspects and choose the appropriate teacher discourse.

5.4 Strengthen positive feedback and pay attention to students' learning emotions and needs.

Feedback is an indispensable part of the classroom communication structure, and it is significantly different from the feedback link in the natural discourse communication outside the classroom. According to its different form of feedback, it can be divided into positive feedback and negative feedback. In the English teaching in our country, it is necessary to use positive feedback such as praise and encouragement in the classroom, which not only increases the confidence of the speakers, but also enhances the students' self-efficacy and the likelihood that more students will participate in discourse co-construction. It, on the other hand, is concerned with students' learning emotions and needs, and is also a necessary condition for building a good teacher-student relationship of mutual respect and mutual trust. Teachers should take great efforts to promote learners' language acquisition, such as being active treatment of students' manifestations or mistakes, creating an active classroom atmosphere, stimulating students' learning motivation, creating an environment and opportunities for learners to exchange information, express ideas, and promote language acquisition through two-way communication and meaningful negotiation. Only by giving students more space for thinking and performance, and stimulating students' desire for knowledge and expression, students' enthusiasm for learning can be better stimulated, and it becomes more meaningful for student to construct knowledge. In this discourse process, teachers need to follow the principles of congruence, acceptance and empathy put forward by Rogers, so that students can feel teachers everywhere in the process of receiving feedback. The trust and respect will promote students' conscious construction of knowledge and meaning, improve the effect of teacher-student interaction, and construct a good teacher-student relationship.

6. Conclusion

Dulay (1982) pointed out that "Teaching a second language means creating for students a part or all their new language environment. The entire responsibility for creating the language environment falls on the teacher who is teaching a language that is not used in the community." It can be seen that teachers' talk plays a significant role in the successful output of learners in the classroom. In other words, the level of teacher's discourse directly affects the effectiveness and quality of students' English learning. Teachers should constantly explore and improve the input of discourse in practice, give full play to the role of teacher discourse in the process of learners' acquisition of second language, and improve the quality of classroom teaching, and thus better cultivate students' language ability and improve their use of language.

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