

A Thesis on the Application of Experiential Reading of Literature in English Reading Literacy Education

Yi Yang

New York University, 10003 New York, USA

Keywords: English Language Arts; Core Literacy; Reading Instruction; Experiential; Literature

Abstract: In recent years, with the proposal of core literacy in English discipline, English reading literacy has received increasing attention due to its important position in the core literacy of English discipline and students' language development. However, the current high school English reading teaching only focuses on the improvement of students' reading ability but neglects the cultivation of reading literacy. Therefore, based on the current situation of English teaching in high school, exploring effective English reading teaching methods to develop students' English reading literacy is an important issue that deserves to be pondered by English teaching staff. Experiential reading teaching helps students understand the text better by creating certain teaching situations and practical activities, which is more conducive to students' constructing new knowledge, improving their language ability and reading literacy through experience and perception. Based on this, this study applies the experiential reading teaching mode to the English literature reading classroom, aiming to study the effect of experiential reading teaching mode on students' English reading literacy.

1. Introduction

With the development of the times and the new requirements for English teaching, the focus of English reading teaching is gradually changing from "reading ability" to "reading literacy". Exploring appropriate reading teaching methods to effectively develop students' English reading literacy is an issue worthy of reflection and practice by English researchers and teachers. Experiential reading teaching focuses on letting students perceive and understand the language in the context, and develop students' comprehensive English ability and reading literacy in the activities of independent experience and cooperative inquiry.[1] Therefore, this study will explore the effect of experiential reading teaching on the development of students' English reading literacy, and because English literature often has vivid language, clever and realistic plots, which is more conducive to the design of teachers' experiential teaching activities and students' sense of good experience, which in turn prompts the students to immerse themselves in the words and lines of the literary works, and to obtain a good reading experience and emotional experience, so the English literature reading class was selected to carry out experiential reading teaching specifically.

2. Definition of the concept

2.1 English Reading Literacy

The English equivalent of "reading literacy" is reading literacy, which means "the ability to receive a good education" or "the ability to read and write", which not only includes the concept of "reading" as a single aspect, but also involves the beliefs, attitudes and habits that individuals and social groups need to have in order to carry out learning and activities in different life and learning scenarios and situations. In English, literacy means "well-educated" or "the ability to read and write", which not only includes the concept of "reading" as a single aspect, but also involves the beliefs, attitudes, and habits that individuals and social groups need to possess in order to carry out their learning and activities in different scenarios and contexts of life and learning.[2]

Reading literacy was first proposed by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PIRLS) conducted by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) in 1991, and connotes the ability to acquire and comprehend written language that is important for the development of the individual, society.[3] At the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of reading literacy has expanded from emphasizing the reader's ability to construct the meaning of a text to the ability to acquire knowledge through reading, to have a good aesthetic experience, and to participate in social activities, due to the fact that reading is not only for the purpose of acquiring information, but also for a variety of purposes.[4] It can be seen that people's understanding of "reading literacy" in this period focuses more on extracting written information through reading, constructing an understanding of textual information based on one's own experience and experience, and being able to transfer and apply the information gained in the process of reading to new situations and new tasks, i.e., emphasizing the aspect of "reading competence". The aspect of "reading literacy" is emphasized. The concept of English reading literacy in this study is defined as the ability to analyze and comprehend the text of the material when reading English, and to regulate and maintain the character of reading as demonstrated by the students.

2.2 Experiential Reading Instruction

In order to form a clear and explicit understanding of experiential reading teaching, first of all, we have to clearly define the connotation of experiential teaching, and different scholars have different opinions about the connotation of experiential teaching. According to Liu Yuan (2011), experiential teaching is a new type of teaching mode different from other teaching modes in the past. Teachers form a unique understanding of the content they teach based on the knowledge and experience they already have in teaching, make full use of all kinds of teaching resources in the school's teaching environment to set up a good language learning environment for the students, and use the language teaching context, practical activities, interaction, cooperation between teachers and students, practical activities, and the method of teaching through the participation of teachers and students. We will help students to improve their English language ability and literacy through the teaching mechanism of teacher-student participation, enjoyment and empathy, and ultimately realize the development of students' practical language application ability and comprehensive literacy.[5] Liu Ze (2021) believes that experiential teaching is a comprehensive consideration of the characteristics of students' current cognitive development, laws and existing knowledge and experience, combined with specific unit teaching content and lesson teaching objectives, fully utilizing a variety of high-quality teaching resources inside and outside the school to create situations for students, provide diversified opportunities for practical activities, to attract, organize and guide the students to actively participate in them, in the experience, perception and reflection, construct new knowledge, enhance emotions and improve competence, building the new knowledge, sublimation emotion, improving ability of teaching methods. To summarize, Liu Yuan's (2011) definition of experiential teaching not only puts the students' initiative and subject position in the learning process in the first place, focuses on the internal characteristics of the students in the learning process, but also explains teaching resources, teaching process, teaching activities and teaching goals, which is very instructive for us to use the experiential teaching mode in our teaching, therefore, this paper will draw on this connotation of experiential teaching to guide reading teaching.

3. Research design

In order to study the effect of experiential reading teaching on students' English reading literacy, this study used questionnaires, tests and teaching experiments with 90 students in experimental and control classes.

3.1 Research target

This study was carried out in a general high school in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, with the students of two sophomore natural classes (Class A and Class B), which the author taught during

her internship, as the experimental research subjects. In this experiment, Class A, with a total of 45 students, was used as the experimental class for this study to implement experiential reading teaching in the English literature reading class of Class A. Class B, with a total of 45 students, was used as the control class to conduct regular reading teaching in the English literature reading class of their class, and the materials read by the two classes were the same. In order to minimize the experimental error, reading ability and reading character pre-tests were conducted in the two classes before the experiment, and the results showed that there was no significant difference between the two classes in terms of English reading ability and reading character, and these two classes were parallel classes. At the same time, both classes were taught by the author herself in English this semester, and they were consistent in terms of teaching materials, teaching content and teaching schedule, so these two classes can be used as research subjects in this experiment. Each class has eight English lessons per week, each lesson is 45 minutes long, of which two English lessons on Fridays are English literature reading lessons. Given the limited time for classroom reading, students were assigned to complete one or two chapters of the book during the weekend. Through a teaching experiment lasting four months in one semester, the data from the English reading ability test papers and the English reading character questionnaire before and after the experiment were analyzed to investigate the impact of experiential reading teaching on students' English reading literacy.

3.2 Research methodology

Based on the research questions, this study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, through literature analysis, questionnaire survey, and teaching experiment, to carry out experimental experiments of experiential reading teaching in the reading classrooms of two natural classes of English literature in the sophomore year of a senior high school in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, and to investigate the effect of experiential reading teaching applied to English reading classrooms on the cultivation of students' reading literacy in English.

3.3 Research tools

The test contains two parts. The first part of the reading comprehension questions consists of two sections of questions, of which the first section is a four-reading question, setting 15 multiple-choice questions of 2 points each for a total of 30 points. The second section is a seven-choice question, given a reading material, students according to the content of the article to choose the appropriate options to fill in the text in line with the context of the short text, a total of 5 questions, 2 points per question, a total of 10 points. Therefore, the first part of the reading comprehension questions is worth 40 points in total. The second part is the use of language knowledge. According to the prompts of the passage, use the appropriate form of words to fill in the blanks. A total of 10 blanks need to be filled, each blank 1 point, a total of 10 points. Therefore, the total score of this reading ability test question was 50 points. The test time was 60 minutes, and both classes before and after the experiment took the reading ability test at the same time; the experimental class was personally proctored by the author, and the control class entrusted the class teacher of the class to proctor the test on behalf of the author.

Reading character in the dimension of English reading literacy is accompanied by students' reading process, and it is more implicit and difficult to be detected directly through test papers, etc. The questionnaire can be used as a more effective tool to investigate students' English reading character. The questionnaire sets questions from two aspects of English reading experience and English reading habits, with a total of 18 questions, aiming to understand the changes in students' English reading character after a period of experiential reading teaching of English literature.

3.4 Research process

This teaching experiment used the experiential reading teaching mode to guide students to read English literature in the experimental class, and the process of this mode can be constructed as follows: "Experience - Share - Summarize - Evaluate - Apply" 5 steps, the reading material text in a full understanding of the students' reading willingness, reading level based on teachers and students

to make a joint choice, and ultimately the reading material will be identified as the Oxford English-Chinese Bilingual Reader Series Level 4 (the next book), selecting this set of books in which the four books to read, including *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Treasure Island*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and at the same time supplemented by the reading content of the English Compulsory III (Humanistic Version) textbook.

Before reading: before the official start of the reading activity, the teacher introduces the background information of the reading text to the students, including the relevant writing background of the book, the author's information, and the theme, etc. Meanwhile, the teacher can appropriately deal with the vocabulary of the article in this session in order to minimize the reading obstacles due to the rare vocabulary of the students in the process of reading. In addition, the most important point is that teachers should briefly introduce the experiential reading teaching mode to students, so that students understand the specific operation of the teaching mode in the reading class of literary works, in order to really experience the ups and downs of the storyline during the reading process, feel the cultural connotations contained between the lines.

Reading: In this section, the teacher in the classroom mainly plays the role of "guide", organizing and guiding the students to carry out experiential reading teaching activities. Due to the time limit of the classroom, 30 minutes of the 50-minute reading class is set as the time for students to experience reading on their own. At this stage, the teacher first presents the students with reading tasks and questions designed according to the text materials, guides the students to carry out free reading activities, and the students formally enter the "experience" part of experiential reading teaching. In this process, students are encouraged to speculate and understand the text through the context, and are not encouraged to consult the dictionary when they encounter vocabulary, in order to maximize the effect of immersive experiential reading. Then, the teacher organizes students to participate in activities based on the plot of the text, guides students to share the information gained during the reading process with their peers, and express their own opinions and speak freely to achieve a deeper understanding of the text. After students share their experiences, teachers should also encourage students to summarize the assessment to supplement the content of formative assessment. This link corresponds to the "experience", "sharing" and "summarizing" links in the experiential reading teaching mode.

After reading: In this section, students use the knowledge they have learned in the previous sections to complete a series of tasks set by the teacher after experiencing reading and sharing. Teachers usually set the following four types of questions: summarize the main idea, fill in the blanks, think and discuss, and excerpt from the text. Compared with the other three types of questions, thinking and discussing questions are more helpful to students' English proficiency, because it is often more difficult to find out the answer directly from the text, and students need to understand the text and think about it before they can come up with the answer. Therefore, these types of questions can better test the effect of students' independent reading experience and motivate students to devote themselves to the reading process. In addition, teachers will encourage students to carry out activities such as role-playing, story continuation and debates to encourage students to apply what they have learned in practice.

4. Analysis of results

4.1 The Effect of Experiential Reading Teaching Model on Students' English Reading Literacy

After comprehensively analyzing the students' English reading ability test scores before and after the experiment, the effects of the experiential reading teaching mode on the students' English reading ability are summarized as follows: before the experiment, there was no significant difference between the English reading ability levels of the experimental class and the control class. After the four-month reading teaching experiment, although the English reading ability test scores of both the control class and the experimental class improved to a certain extent, the reading ability test scores of the students in the experimental class improved significantly higher than those of the students in the control class ($t=-3.621, df=81.693, p<0.05$), and there is a significant difference

between the English reading ability of the experimental class and that of the control class in English reading ability. ability has a significant difference. Therefore, experiential reading teaching has a positive effect on the development of students' English reading ability.

From the overall situation of the reading character questionnaire, the mean value of the reading character item scores of the control group before the experiment was 2.89, and the mean value of the scores of the experimental class was 2.79, and there was no significant difference between the two classes before the experiment ($p>0.05$). This shows that the English reading character of the two classes before the experiment is basically the same, and there is no significant difference. As far as reading experience is concerned, the experimental and control classes after the experiment showed significant differences ($t=-7.256$, $df=82.374$, $p<0.05$): the experimental class implementing experiential reading teaching gained significantly better reading experience than the control class ($MD=1.09$). As far as reading habits are concerned, the control and experimental classes also showed significant differences ($t=-5.559$, $df=86.864$, $p<0.05$): the experimental class implementing experiential reading teaching showed significantly better reading habits than the control class ($MD=0.8$). In terms of reading character questionnaire as a whole, there was a significant difference between the two classes in terms of reading character after the experiment ($t=-6.781$, $df=86.944$, $p<0.05$): the students in the experimental class performed significantly better than the students in the control class in terms of reading character after the experiment ($MD=0.94$).

As a whole, the implementation of experiential reading teaching in the reading class of English and American literature can fully stimulate students' interest in English reading, so that students' attitudes towards English reading have significantly improved, from the previous neglect of English reading learning to the importance of English reading. At the same time, students' self-assessment of English reading has also improved to a certain extent, and their English reading experience has become richer. Therefore, the experiential reading teaching mode has a positive influence on students' English reading experience.

According to the results of the independent sample T-test of the reading ability post-test scores of the two classes, the Sig (two-tailed) value of 0.001 is much smaller than 0.05, which indicates that at this time there is a significant difference between the reading ability post-test scores of the two classes, and that the implementation of experiential reading teaching has greatly improved the English reading ability of the experimental class students. On the other hand, the students' reading character has also improved significantly. Before the experiment, the independent sample t-test of the reading character questionnaire of the two classes showed that the Sig (two-tailed) value was 0.772 much larger than 0.05, at this time, the two classes did not have significant differences in reading character. According to the results of the independent samples t-test of the post-test data of the English questionnaire for the two classes, there was a significant difference ($p<0.05$) between the two classes in English reading character after the experiment. This is basically consistent with the results of the experiential reading teaching practice research done by Kohonen (2001), Xiong Yan (2012), Du Shuping (2018), and Li Panke (2021). This is because somatic reading teaching is a kind of teaching method that promotes students' experience and exploration in the language environment, which can largely stimulate students' interest in English reading, develop comprehensive English reading skills, let students experience the fun of reading in English, get good experiences such as a sense of pleasure and participation in the reading process, and maximize the development of students' English reading literacy.

4.2 The Effects of Experiential Reading Instruction on English Reading Literacy of Students at Different Levels of Proficiency

After a four-month experimental experiential reading teaching of English literature, the English reading scores of the experimental class in different English proficiency groups of high, middle and low levels were improved, among which the students in the low proficiency group showed the most significant improvement in their reading ability ($MD=12$), followed by the middle proficiency group ($MD=6.32$), and there was no significant difference in the English reading ability of the students in the high proficiency group ($p>0.05$). To summarize, experiential reading teaching

has a positive effect on the development of students' English reading ability, but the effect on the English reading ability of students in different level groups of high, medium and low is different. Among them, the development of reading ability of students in the low level group after the experiment is the most significant, the development of English reading ability of students in the middle level group is the second most significant, and there is no significant difference in the change of English reading ability of students in the high level group.

The change in reading character of students in the middle level group before and after the experiment was the most significant (MD=1.22), followed by low level students (MD=1.05), while the degree of influence on the promotion of reading character change for high level students was the smallest among the three groups of students of different levels (MD=0.36). To summarize, experiential reading teaching has the most significant promotion effect on the English character of middle-level students, both in terms of English reading experience and reading habits have improved substantially compared with the preexperimental period, the positive impact on low-level students is the next most significant, and the promotion effect on the English reading character of high-level students is the least significant.

Before the implementation of experiential reading teaching, high-level learners already had good English reading ability and showed better reading quality, and the degree of positive change in reading literacy was small because their English reading literacy had already reached a high level. On the other hand, the reading ability and reading character of the middle and low level students before the experiment changed poorly, and there is still a lot of room for improvement in English reading literacy. While experiential reading teaching focuses on the student's subjective position, on the student's experiential, participatory, and creative aspects of the reading process, and learns knowledge and transforms it through the experience of the language environment and the plot, the interest of the middle and low level learners in reading in English is thus stimulated and The interest of intermediate and low level learners in English reading is thus stimulated, and they actively participate in English reading learning, so English reading literacy can be maximized.

5. Conclusion

In the face of the development of the times and the new requirements put forward by the English reading teaching, teachers should constantly update their own knowledge system, apply and develop new teaching methods and classroom teaching modes in the English reading classroom, and make timely adjustments to the teaching modes and methods according to the actual classroom teaching and the students' learning situation. On the basis of understanding the experiential teaching theory and experiential reading teaching mode, teachers can use the experiential reading teaching mode in the reading classroom to fully mobilize students' reading initiative and enthusiasm, enrich English teaching activities so that students can devote themselves to reading activities, experience and comprehend the content of the plot of the reading text and the deeper meanings of the main idea, and a good reading experience will promote the development of students' reading literacy. The good reading experience will promote the development of students' reading literacy.

References

- [1] Hu Yanqiu, Liu Haiyan. Research on English reading guidance for college students in the context of digital media [J]. *Modern English*, NO.10, PP. 96-99, 2021.
- [2] Huang Xiangzhou, Tang Siliang, Zhang Yin. Application of joint training method of mixed word vectors and cascaded recurrent neural networks in machine reading comprehension of opinion-based questions[J]. *Frontiers of Information Technology & Electronic Engineering*, VOL.21, NO.09, PP. 1346-1356, 2020.
- [3] Yang Z, Wang C, Feng L, et al. Unsuccessful letter-sound integration in English reading by native Chinese speakers: evidence from an event related potentials study[J]. *Science Bulletin*, VOL.61, NO.24, PP. 1855-1864, 2016.

- [4] Paek M, Leem C, Bae D. Multi-reader algorithm in sports timing systems and its application in low frequency bandwidth [J]. China Communications, VOL.10, NO.12, PP. 16-24, 2013.
- [5] Bellezza G.; Geopark Interpretation Assessment - Theory and Practice" - a geographical perspective on geoparks and national parks and a monograph worth reading[J]. Journal of Geographical Sciences, VOL.23, NO.05, PP. 958-960, 2013.