

The Application of Game in Junior English Vocabulary Teaching

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Abstract: With the form and implementation of the new curriculum, many teaching methods have gradually emerged in junior high school English teaching, and game teaching method has been widely used at this time. Game teaching method is often used in English teaching, which can be taught in games and stimulate students' interest in learning. Traditional teaching methods cannot arouse students' interest in learning, and the efficiency of students' classroom learning is constantly decreasing. Game teaching method can help students to learn actively. Students need to develop their brains and think actively, so as to improve their learning and innovation ability and improve their comprehensive quality.

Keywords: Junior Students; English Vocabulary Teaching; Application of Game.

1. Introduction

There are mainly three parts in this chapter. The first part states the background of this essay. The second part is the purpose and significance of this essay. In the last part, the author clarifies the overall structure of this thesis.

1.1. Research Background

With the continuous development of economic, the economic and trade exchanges between China and other countries are increasing day by day. English occupies an important position in the world, so our country needs more English talents. From English curriculum standards for compulsory education, language knowledge, including phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, discourse and pragmatic knowledge, is an important basis for the development of language skills. For students, vocabulary learning forms the basis of their language learning. Wilkins, a linguist, believes that in language learning, people may be able to convey a small amount of information without learning grammar, while they cannot convey any information at all without learning vocabulary (D.A. Wilkins, 1972:111). As we all know, junior middle school is a key period for students to learn English and develop their interest in English learning. But in our country, teachers often like to use the cramming method of teaching. These traditional teaching methods make the classroom atmosphere dimmer and students' interest in learning is not high. Therefore, Chinese education leads to increased study pressure for many students, and students are tired of learning English. The English learning ability and interest of junior high students are improving rapidly, and it's also a key stage for students to grasp vocabulary. During the process of learning English, vocabulary is a boring part for most students. So many students often lose interest in learning vocabulary. Game plays a vital important role in developing of junior high students' learning interest, and could acquire vocabulary in the process of playing games. Games are closely connected with English vocabulary teaching content, which can improve students' interest in learning vocabulary and deepen their memory of words. The problems of vocabulary learning are categorized as follows:

1.1.1. Deficiency of Vocabulary Knowledge

Students lack a comprehensive knowledge about

vocabulary and do not cultivate good habits to memorize vocabulary. Junior high school students often regard vocabulary as the combination of letters, and most of them know little about the pronunciation and spelling rules, let alone the inner relation between them. Thus, students will apply mechanical memorizing to vocabulary learning instead of associative memory.

1.1.2. Failure of Pragmatic Use

Another common problem in vocabulary learning is that students who can memorize the vocabulary well find it is hard to use them correctly. To learn an English word comprehensively and use it accurately, students are supposed to learn it from nine aspects including pronunciation, spelling, grammatical features and its pragmatic meaning. Although students conquer the difficulty memorizing the spelling and meaning of the word which is the superficial aspect, yet they ignore the pragmatic usage. In consequence, students who get high scores in dictation sometimes are not good at English exams since the words have not been their positive vocabulary.

1.1.3. Lack of Learning Interest

Students aren't interested in learning English vocabulary. Students feel bored to learn vocabulary with the traditional method since they have to listen to the teacher passively. They just spend too much time memorizing the words mechanically instead of mastering the scientific methods. As a result, they feel too tired in learning vocabulary or lose interest finally, for example, students are unwilling to memorize the words or even forget them after a short time, because the words they have mastered can't be put into practical use and they will lose confidence gradually at vocabulary learning. Although they spend much time and spare no efforts, the results may be unsatisfactory since they have formed the mechanical and rigid way of learning vocabulary under the effect of traditional approaches to vocabulary teaching.

1.2. Problems with English Vocabulary Teaching

In present English classroom in China, some teachers fail to present English words in various and interesting ways. They often ask their students to read the vocabulary list after them, explain the meanings or just to give students a few

examples, and then make students memorize the new words mechanically. That is one of the most crucial reasons why students find English vocabulary learning is rather dull, and consequently, students will gradually lose interest and confidence in English learning since they do not have enough basic vocabulary input.

Compared with other skills of English learning the strategy in vocabulary teaching is often neglected though teachers acknowledge that vocabulary is essential. Through the interview with experienced Teachers all the teachers confirmed that they need to pay more attention to the pragmatic level of vocabulary teaching. However in order to save time during the class and help the students get high mark in the examination they are more likely to focus on the spelling and collocation. Usually they will not spend extra time on vocabulary teaching. And they tried to apply other methods to vocabulary teaching that it is founded few methods can arouse students' interest in a short time.

On the one hand, vocabulary teaching method is relatively simple. Lvfei and Qicong combed the current situation of English vocabulary teaching in junior high schools in recent years and found that most English teachers rely too much on vocabulary lists and ignore other vocabulary teaching forms in vocabulary teaching in the stage of basic education. Although teachers are aware of the limitation of vocabulary, it is often difficult for teachers to make new attempts and changes in vocabulary teaching due to the limitations of traditional teaching ideas and classroom time (Lv&Qi,2018.5). In the current junior high school English class, teachers mainly use the following explanation methods: reading-students' practice-explaining the usage of key words and making sentences. This method seems reasonable, but it does not help students memorize the words more efficiently in the memory stage.

On the other hand, teachers neglected to teach effective methods and a strategist of vocabulary learning being of great importance to improve the efficiency and quality of vocabulary learning. Some English teachers mistake vocabulary learning as a self-learning task by students off to class. Therefore they spend plenty of time training reading or listening abilities but little time and vocabulary. Teachers often read and dictate vocabulary lists in class and pay little attention to make students learn how to memorize and master the words in short time efficiently.

Under the circumstance, students find it difficult to learn vocabulary well in limited time. Therefore, English teachers should pay more attention to vocabulary teaching and learn how to effectively design English vocabulary teaching, stimulate students' interest in learning and help students master and use vocabulary which will directly affect their improvement of the overall quality in English teaching. Therefore, the author, through the analysis of some problems existing in the current junior middle school English vocabulary teaching, analyzes how to improve the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching and shows the individual superficial views upon the problems, in order to provide a further reference to junior middle school English etymology teaching.

1.3. Research Purpose and Significance

In the traditional English teaching, the teaching method of traditional knowledge giving and receiving is mainly, and the teaching method is dull and monotonous, which tends to weaken the enthusiasm and initiative of students to study.

Under the current new curriculum standard, the emphasis from teachers to students to learn, pay attention to improve the subject status of students in the teaching process, stimulate the initiative and enthusiasm of students to learn. Therefore, this paper proposes to improve the classroom activity through games, so as to stimulate students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning. At the same time, this kind of activity strengthens students' confidence in learning English, eliminates psychological pressure and anxiety, and thus optimizes the efficiency of English learning. This paper summarizes the basic principles that should be followed, and puts forward specific methods and matters that we should pay attention to in terms of game design and its application in college English classroom teaching. Based on the previous research results, this paper lists several examples according to practical experience, such as word monitoring, sentence updating and reciting, classroom discussion, debate, role playing, etc. To some extent, it can change the monotony and dullness of traditional English teaching and combine learning with games.

1.4. Research Theory and Method

Interview and literature research method were used in this thesis.

2. Literature Review

After having a certain understanding of current vocabulary teaching and game teaching classes, this chapter mainly introduces the definition of game teaching method and analyzes the relevant research status and results of English vocabulary teaching and game teaching classes at home and abroad, so as to find the direction of this study.

2.1. Game-based Teaching

Game teaching is a clever combination of game and teaching, using some game activities, which can make students' concentrate, improve their intelligence, and improve the effect of class. The classroom is like a playground, the atmosphere is relaxed and active. Game teaching method is to teach in the form of games. Junior high school students have active thinking, if the teacher has been using the traditional teaching methods, teaching, reading, memorizing, copying such rote teaching methods will make students feel bored, game teaching like a new world, the liberation of students at the same time also achieved teaching. However, there are still few researches on game teaching, and there are many problems in the actual operation of teachers. In order to achieve good results, teachers need to constantly reflect on the teaching practice, develop games suitable for classroom, and effectively improve the quality of teaching.

As we all know, vocabulary is the basis of all languages and plays an important role in learning a foreign language. These are elements related to listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to communicate well with foreigners, students should have enough vocabulary and know how they use it. Students understand the importance of mastering vocabulary in learning English, but most students cannot learn English vocabulary correctly. Students may recognize the form of a word and believe it to be a "familiar word", but they may not be able to pronounce it correctly or use it correctly in different contexts. For most teachers, they only explain the meaning, pronunciation and spelling of words in some traditional teaching method. However, it has nothing to do with the students' interest, and it's not good teaching if it

goes on like this.

2.2. Vocabulary Teaching Research

In recent years, the investigation shows that English vocabulary teaching has gradually become a hot topic of educational reform, and more and more scholars are paying more attention to it and carrying out multi-angle thinking and research. The new curriculum reform put forward new requirements on the vocabulary of junior high school English, which promoted the importance of junior high school vocabulary learning from the side. In foreign countries, vocabulary teaching has been developed in parallel with linguistics, psychology and so on.

Through the comparison of relevant research results at home and abroad, it is found that there are many discussions on vocabulary teaching methods and strategic theories. As for the “mastery” of vocabulary, Faerch holds that a word can be fully mastered only when it is familiar with all the potential meanings of a word, its usage occasions, collocation forms, and its connections with other words in the same scope. Just can “write silently”, can not be regarded as the “master” of the vocabulary, can only be said to understanding of usage is the real sense of mastery. New Zealand applied. Vocabulary points out that the study of vocabulary learning should mainly focus on the definition, control, memory, learning methods and test evaluation of vocabulary.

2.2.1. Research Status of Domestic Vocabulary Teaching

English vocabulary teaching in China is largely influenced by foreign schools of language teaching. The translation method is the longest used method in English teaching in China. It has been used since 1960 until the new curriculum reform in 2001. Even now, there are still many older teachers who use the translation method to teach English, which has a profound influence on English vocabulary teaching in China. The teaching procedure of translation vocabulary class is: the teacher presents the phonetic symbols of words, leads the words, the students read after them, and the teacher explains the grammar rules of the vocabulary. Translation method has its advantages in teaching new vocabulary. It can systematically teach the usage and rules of new words, save time and improve classroom efficiency. The disadvantage is that the teacher is the authority of class, while the students are only the audience, lacking of initiative and enthusiasm. In the long run, students are more constrained, which is not conducive to the development of interest in learning.

2.2.2. Current Situation of Foreign Vocabulary Teaching Research

Before the 20th century, foreign scholars focused on the study of language teaching on grammar, followed by pronunciation. Most people believe that vocabulary memorization is repetition and recitation, and there is no need for teaching strategies and methods. For a long period of time, the theoretical research and practical exploration of vocabulary teaching are in a blank period. This situation lasted until the 1920s and 1930s, when the popular “reading teaching” made people realize the importance of vocabulary as an importance aspect of foreign language learning. Due to the influence of structuralism, the listening and speaking method prevailing from 1940s to 1960s made the whole society pay the least attention to vocabulary teaching, and vocabulary teaching became a subordinate unit of language teaching.

History rolled forward. In the 1970s, the rise of communicative language teaching made researchers realize

the importance of vocabulary again and began to pay more attention to vocabulary teaching. The famous English linguist D.A.Wilkins pointed out in *Second Language Teaching* (1972): “If there is no pronunciation and grammar, a little information can be conveyed; but if you don’t have words, you can’t convey anything.” The gradual rise of sociolinguistics has made more and more language teaching. At the end of 1970s, the status of vocabulary teaching was recognized and confirmed.

In the 1990s, especially in the 21st century, vocabulary teaching has become more and more prominent and become the key and foundation of foreign language teaching.

3. Theoretical Foundations of the Study

3.1. Herbart’s Theory of Interest

Herbart was famous German educators, psychologist and philosopher. In western educational history, he was regarded as the founder of the “science and education”, he is on the basis of Kant’s epistemology said to create the “rational interest”, inherited the German classical philosophy study of people’s interests into fruit, especially through many years of education theory and practice, combine closely interested in ideals and education system. He took cultivating students’ “various interests” as the “direct aim” of teaching, so as to realize the “highest purpose of education—virtue”, and stressed that “the creation and development of interest is the primary task of teaching”. Based on his own psychological analysis, Herbart proposed a systematic curriculum theory, which promoted the development of teaching methods and reflected the deepening of scientific understanding of teaching theory and pedagogy at the scientific level at that time, and its influence has not faded up to now. In his educational theory, Herbart takes interests as the main line and discusses the purpose, content and method of education of education, making it the most active core thought and important principle in his theory.

Interest is the key to learn a language well. Stimulating students’ interest in learning English is an importance task in English teaching. Herbart to the teaching process and students’ psychological activity specifically together, will be based on the analysis of the teaching theory based on psychology, trying to set a clear and standardize the teaching mode, not only fully reflects the people know the process of teaching activities and development, also to rote learning and mechanical training method in the teaching of denial. It has extensive and profound significance in teaching practice. Based on this study from enhance students’ interest in learning, in order to prove that game teaching is conducive to stimulate students’ interest in learning.

3.2. Learning by Doing

The theory of learning by doing comes from Dewey’s teaching theory. Experience and knowledge can only be gained by doing. The theory combines knowledge and practice, that is, school activities and teaching content. Dewey argued that children who learn knowledge should be adapted to their physical and mental development, and believed that children’s physical development is inseparable from activities.

Through “learning by doing”, emotional, thoughtful and active children can become stronger, more capable, and have a better understanding of their relationship with nature and society. Of course, when children participate in school

learning activities, they are the center of learning. Teachers just play a leading role in the classroom. Dewey also puts forward the teaching process that should be composed of five parts: creating situation, clarifying problems, putting forward hypotheses, solving problems and testing hypotheses. "Learning from doing" require students to contact specific things personally, and uses various senses to perceive things, and them according to the acquired knowledge to find the way to solve problems, and finally achieves the purpose of solving problems by students themselves. This method is useful to cultivate students' ability to analyze and solve problems and the ability of working independently.

After studying the traditional game-based teaching theory, Dewey combined the existing education theory to construct the activity education system. Dewey hated traditional book teaching. He thought teaching should be based on students' interests. Dewey suggested that schools could offer game courses, and he clearly pointed out the value of using games for teaching (Li, 2010). However, Liu and Tang (2008) pointed out that theory of "learning by doing" only applies to primary school and low-level teaching work, not to later and advanced teaching work.

Game-based teaching requires all students to participate in classroom activities and enable students to develop their abilities in practice. When students study by themselves, they can get knowledge better. In addition, junior middle school English learning belongs to the lower level of English learning. Therefore, the theory of "learning by doing" provides a substantial guidance model for English game teaching in middle schools.

4. Research Design and Procedure

Modern education reform pays more and more attention to the active participation of students, and game teaching has gradually entered the classroom. The author draws lessons from the previous research results, adopts the method of empirical research, takes the real classroom as the research environment, preliminary discusses the application of game teaching method in the vocabulary classroom teaching of junior, and studies whether it can improve students' interest in learning English and enhance the effect.

4.1. Research Design

Generally speaking, experimental design of three parts: experimental question, experimental object and experimental tool. Combined with literature review and theoretical basis, this section will mainly describe the specific implementation process of the experiment at home and abroad, and elaborates the meaning, functions and types of games. This paper applies games to the vocabulary class of junior, and researches the following problems based on the theory of interest of Herbart and Dewey's learning by doing:

1) What is the impact of game teaching method on junior high school English vocabulary learning interest?

2) What is the impact of game teaching method on junior high school English vocabulary learning?

The author carries out the game teaching mode in the experimental class and the traditional teaching mode in the control class and the questionnaire and comparison of the test results between the experimental class and the control class, the author analyzes whether the game teaching mode can improve the efficiency of students' memorizing words, thus improving their interest in English learning and achieving the purpose of improving their English scores.

5. Conclusion

In junior high school, vocabulary teaching attaches great importance to English ability, but it is difficult for students to find the fun of vocabulary learning. The advantage of junior high school students is that they are very active and competitive in class. The game-based teaching method transforms monotonous vocabulary memory into diversified and vivid vocabulary acquisition, which provides students with practical communicative situations and enables students to master more vocabulary.

There are several other factors worth considering when using game pedagogy. First, teaching should choose the right words, because not all words can be used in the game. For example, some abstract words. In this case, teachers can apply other teaching techniques, such as translation teaching. Third, the variety of games is essential to the effectiveness of teaching.

Based on the research, we can conclude that students prefer game-based classed to traditional ones. Game-based teaching can improve students' interest in learning English and form a sense of competition and cooperation. After game-based teaching, students become more and more outgoing and confident in learning English well. In addition, game-based teaching can improve students' English proficiency. Therefore, game-based teaching is an effective way for students to learn English well and also provides the possibility of improving English teaching for junior middle schools.

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