

The Effect of TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) on Chinese Students' English Language Proficiency

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Abstract: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a language teaching method centred on accomplishing specific tasks. This paper summaries the application methods of TBLT in the process of teaching English in China. TBLT can solve the problems of this students' lack of opportunities to use language in real contexts and insufficient comprehensive language skills. However, TBLT also produces some negative impacts in the process of English teaching in China, and this paper also puts forward some methods to deal with them, hoping to provide some references and insights for the reform of English education in China.

Keywords: TBLT; English Language Teaching; Teaching Effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Since 1956, the Chinese Ministry of Education has emphasized the necessity of English education in national construction and development. As the most widely used language in the world, the usefulness of English is self-evident. English is vital to Chinese students, not only as a bridge to a globally spoken language, but also as a key to opening up international perspectives and opportunities. By learning English, Chinese students are able to access the world's knowledge system and obtain the latest academic and cultural information. In addition, with the globalization of the economy, English proficiency has become an important component of competitiveness in the workplace, with a significant impact on employment and career development. Mastery of English also facilitates effective communication with people from different cultural backgrounds and promotes cultural exchange and understanding. Therefore, English education is highly valued in China, aiming to cultivate students' international competitiveness and cross-cultural communication skills, and to lay a solid language foundation for them to go to the world stage.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a language teaching method centered on accomplishing specific tasks [1]. It defines tasks as activities involving the use of language with specific objectives that encourage learners to use their language resources to achieve meaningful communication. The core feature of TBLT is that it emphasizes the practical use and functionality of language, and designs teaching tasks by simulating real-life contexts, so that learners can improve their language skills in the process of completing these tasks. This approach advocates "learning by doing", emphasizes student participation and interaction, and encourages independent learning and creative thinking. TBLT usually consists of three phases: pre-tasking, task cycling, and language focusing, and is designed to promote the natural acquisition of language through authentic and meaningful communication activities [2].

Since 1956, the Chinese Ministry of Education has emphasized the necessity of English education in national construction and development. However, Chinese students have some difficulties in learning English [3]. The main challenges Chinese students face in learning English include

a lack of opportunities to use the language in authentic contexts, an over-emphasis on memorization of grammar and vocabulary rather than practical use, and a lack of development of creativity and communicative competence due to exam-oriented education. They urgently need a more interactive and communication-oriented learning environment with authentic and meaningful tasks to improve their language skills, as well as more opportunities for cross-cultural communication to enhance their practical language use [4].

As a teaching strategy focusing on the practical application of language, the potential impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on Chinese students' English proficiency deserves in-depth exploration. By analyzing the effectiveness of TBLT implementation, we can better understand how this method can help students overcome the limitations in traditional teaching and improve their comprehensive use of English, thus providing a strong reference and inspiration for English education reform in China.

This paper analyzes how TBLT is applied in English teaching in China, the positive and negative effects of TBLT on students' English proficiency, and hopes to provide some references and insights for the reform of English education in China.

2. How to Apply TBLT to English Teaching in China

2.1. Assign Pre Class Tasks to Prepare Students for Classroom Learning

Assigning pre class tasks is an important step in applying TBLT to English teaching in China. These tasks aim to help students prepare for upcoming classroom learning, ensuring that they can actively participate and benefit from classroom activities. Here are some specific application methods:

Preview new vocabulary and grammar: Teachers can provide vocabulary and grammar exercises related to the upcoming topic to help students familiarize and master this basic knowledge in advance.

Reading comprehension: For the upcoming text or topic, teachers can assign some reading materials and require students to preview, so that they can better understand and participate in discussions in the classroom.

Listening exercises: Provide audio or video materials related to the classroom topic, allowing students to preview and improve their understanding and listening skills of the classroom content.

Preparation for discussion topics: If group discussions or debates are planned in class, teachers can provide relevant topics in advance, allowing students time to prepare their own viewpoints and arguments.

Cultural background understanding: For teaching content that involves specific cultural backgrounds, teachers can assign some research tasks about the target culture to help students better understand and appreciate cultural differences.

By assigning these pre class tasks, students can better prepare themselves for entering a state of English learning, while also improving their participation and learning effectiveness in the classroom.

2.2. Reasonably Setting and Carrying out Teaching Tasks

When applying TBLT to English classrooms, teachers need to first determine teaching objectives. Teachers need to clarify the objectives of classroom teaching, including language knowledge, skills, and pragmatics, based on students' English proficiency and teaching syllabus. After determining teaching objectives, teachers need to design appropriate tasks. Based on teaching objectives, design tasks that can stimulate students' interest, align with their cognitive and language proficiency. These tasks should have practical significance and be closely related to real life, so that students can be interested in learning and immerse themselves in it. At the same time, the requirements and objectives of the task should be clearly presented to students in the classroom, ensuring that they understand the purpose of the task and the methods of execution.

After informing students of specific tasks, teachers should organize task implementation and guide students on how to carry out tasks, which can be through individual work or group cooperation. Teachers play the role of facilitators in student communication, encouraging students to learn independently and engage in interactive communication. When students perform tasks, teachers should closely monitor their learning process, provide necessary guidance and support, and encourage students to self correct and learn from each other.

After completing the student task, the teacher evaluates the student's performance, including language accuracy, fluency, and effectiveness in completing the task. Feedback should be specific, positive, and helpful for students to improve.

2.3. Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching Plans

After applying TBLT to English classrooms, evaluating the effectiveness of tasks, analyzing students' learning processes, collecting feedback from students, and adjusting teaching methods are crucial steps to improve the effectiveness of TBLT in English education.

Firstly, assessing the effectiveness of the task is crucial. Teachers need to carefully consider whether the task has achieved the expected teaching objectives, whether it has stimulated students' interest in learning, and whether it has adapted to their actual language level. If the task fails to fully attract students or achieve the expected results, the teacher may need to redesign the task to make it more challenging or closer to students' interests.

Secondly, analyzing the learning process of students is crucial for understanding their learning needs and difficulties. Teachers should observe the performance of students in tasks, including whether they actively participate, whether they can cooperate effectively, and whether they use the target language in the process of completing tasks. By analyzing the learning process of students, teachers can understand their learning needs and difficulties, and provide targeted guidance and support.

In addition, collecting feedback from students is also indispensable. Teachers can collect feedback from students on tasks through methods such as questionnaire surveys and group discussions. Student feedback is very helpful in understanding their feelings towards the task, whether they have any confusion or suggestions. Teachers can adjust the design and implementation of tasks based on student feedback to better meet their needs.

Finally, adjusting teaching methods is the key to improving teaching quality. TBLT emphasizes "learning by doing", but it does not mean that all tasks must be perfect. Teachers need to constantly adjust their teaching methods based on student feedback and their own observations. For example, if students are found to have difficulties in certain language points, teachers can add targeted language input and practice in the next stage of tasks.

Overall, after applying TBLT to English classrooms, teachers need to reflect and adjust to ensure the effectiveness and adaptability of the task. By evaluating the effectiveness of tasks, analyzing students' learning processes, collecting feedback from students, and adjusting teaching methods, teachers can continuously improve the teaching quality of TBLT and help students better master English.

3. The Positive Impact of TBLT on the English Proficiency of Chinese Students

TBLT has brought positive changes to the English learning of Chinese students [3-7]. It not only improves students' practical language proficiency, but also enhances their learning motivation, promotes the development of comprehensive language skills, and optimizes the classroom teaching structure. These positive influences work together to help Chinese students comprehensively improve their English proficiency, laying a solid language foundation for their future academic and career development.

3.1. Improving Practical Language Proficiency:

The teaching process of TBLT is closely integrated with real-life language usage scenarios, which helps students apply the language knowledge learned in the classroom to practical life. By participating in various tasks, students can not only exercise their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, but also learn how to use language appropriately in practical communication. For example, in a simulated shopping task, students need to use the vocabulary and sentence structures they have learned to express their needs. This improvement in practical application ability is of great significance for their future academic and career development.

3.2. Enhancing Language Learning Motivation:

In traditional English teaching, students often passively

receive language knowledge and lack opportunities for active participation and practical application. The implementation of TBLT can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning. By designing tasks related to student life, teachers can stimulate their curiosity and thirst for knowledge, making them more engaged in the learning process. When students realize that learning English can help them solve practical problems, their learning motivation will also be enhanced.

3.3. Promoting the Development of Comprehensive Language Skills:

TBLT not only focuses on a certain aspect of language, but also comprehensively improves the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the process of completing tasks, students need to use multiple language skills to acquire, process, and transmit information. For example, in a survey task, students may need to listen to recorded materials, read relevant texts, write reports in English, and present results orally. This comprehensive training helps to comprehensively enhance students' language abilities.

3.4. Optimize Classroom Teaching Structure:

The introduction of TBLT has prompted teachers to transform traditional teaching methods, making the classroom more focused on student participation and interaction. This student-centered teaching method can optimize the classroom teaching structure, improve teaching efficiency and quality. In the TBLT classroom, teachers are no longer just knowledge transmitters, but have become guides and supporters of student learning. By designing diverse tasks, teachers can motivate students to learn and grow through collaboration, exploration, and practice.

4. The Negative Impact of TBLT on the English Proficiency of Chinese Students

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), as a task centered teaching method, has achieved certain results in English education, but it has also had some negative impacts in the teaching environment in China [6-7].

4.1. Student Foundation and Adaptability

Due to the long-term exam oriented learning environment, Chinese students may lack the necessary language proficiency and self-learning ability. When faced with TBLT, a teaching method that emphasizes independent exploration and practical application, some students may feel uncomfortable. For example, for students who are accustomed to passively receiving knowledge and lack collaborative learning experience, tasks such as group discussions and project research in TBLT may pose challenges. In addition, if teachers do not fully consider the basic level and personalized needs of students when implementing TBLT, it may lead to confusion and frustration among students, thereby affecting their learning effectiveness and motivation. Therefore, teachers need to pay sufficient attention and support to the foundation and adaptability of students when adopting TBLT.

If teachers do not fully consider the basic level of students when implementing TBLT, ignoring the significant individual differences in student foundation, it may lead to confusion and frustration among students, thereby affecting their learning effectiveness and motivation. In addition, due to the

long-term exam oriented learning environment, Chinese students may lack the necessary language proficiency and self-learning ability. When faced with TBLT, a teaching method that emphasizes independent exploration and practical application, some students may feel uncomfortable. For example, for students who are accustomed to passively receiving knowledge and lack collaborative learning experience, tasks such as group discussions and project research in TBLT may pose challenges. Therefore, teachers need to pay sufficient attention and support to the foundation and adaptability of students when adopting TBLT.

4.2. Limitations on Resources and Conditions:

The implementation of TBLT often requires certain teaching resources and conditional support, such as rich teaching materials and a good classroom environment. In some regions and schools in China, it may be difficult to effectively implement TBLT due to resource and condition limitations. For example, schools may not have sufficient multimedia equipment, teaching materials, or suitable classroom environments to support TBLT activities. This may lead to a decline in teaching quality and affect the improvement of students' English proficiency. Therefore, if we want to better utilize TBLT, we must overcome these limitations, and schools and education departments need to invest more resources and support to create better conditions for the implementation of TBLT.

4.3. Insufficient Understanding of TBLT among Teachers

Due to the relatively new application of TBLT in China, some teachers may not be familiar with its philosophy and implementation methods. This may lead to difficulties for teachers in designing and organizing TBLT activities, making it difficult to effectively guide students to complete tasks, thereby affecting their learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers need to receive relevant training and guidance to improve their understanding and application ability of TBLT.

5. Conclusion

As a globally recognized language, English is crucial for students as it opens the door to international communication, enhances academic and career opportunities, promotes cultural understanding and knowledge acquisition. In China, students face challenges in the process of learning English, such as a lack of opportunities for language use in real-life contexts, an excessive emphasis on memorizing grammar and vocabulary rather than practical application, and insufficient development of creativity and communication skills due to exam oriented education. The implementation of TBLT can effectively overcome the limitations of traditional teaching.

TBLT has a potential positive impact on the English proficiency of Chinese students, such as improving practical language proficiency, enhancing learning motivation, promoting the development of comprehensive language skills, and optimizing classroom teaching structure, but there are also some challenges. This includes issues with the foundation and adaptability of students, limitations on resources and conditions, and insufficient understanding of TBLT by teachers. To maximize the effectiveness of TBLT, it is necessary to pay attention to and address these challenges, such as helping students preview new knowledge through pre class tasks, carrying out teaching tasks closely related to real

life, evaluating and improving teaching plans, and providing teacher training to enhance their proficiency in TBLT.

In summary, as a teaching strategy that emphasizes practical language application, TBLT's impact on the English proficiency of Chinese students deserves in-depth exploration. I believe that through continuous experimentation and practical application, TBLT can help Chinese students comprehensively improve their English proficiency.

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