

Research on the Application Strategies of Dialogue Teaching in University English Major Instruction

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Abstract: In the new context, dialogue has become an effective approach for resolving international disputes and interpersonal conflicts, finding widespread application across various fields. Similarly, dialogue is also applicable in the realm of education. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, introduced the concept of dialogue teaching, which not only fosters innovative teaching methods but also empowers student agency. Within the context of English major instruction at the university level, integrating dialogue teaching can establish a conducive language environment, break free from traditional didactic teaching models, engage students actively, and enhance the effectiveness of English instruction. This article elaborates on the dialogue teaching method, analyzes the value and principles of applying dialogue teaching in university English major instruction, and presents specific application strategies to elevate the quality of education in English majors.

In the 1970s, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire introduced the concept of dialogue teaching in his seminal work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," emphasizing the dialogical nature of teaching. Freire regarded dialogue as a creative activity, offering a novel direction for innovation in educational practices. In the context of university English major instruction, considering English as a language-based discipline, dialogue teaching exhibits strong practicality. It not only hones students' listening and speaking skills but also enriches their English vocabulary, enabling more proficient communication in various contexts and thereby enhancing students' overall communicative competence.

1. Overview of Dialogue Teaching Method

1.1. Essence of Dialogue

From the essence of dialogue, it refers to the interactive process between teachers and students in the "teaching" and "learning" phases, where both parties possess equal rights to speak. In the traditional teaching model, teachers often take a dominant role, leaving students in a passive listening position. This didactic approach not only deprives students of their voice but also turns English learning into "mute English." In the dialogue teaching mode, emphasizing the active role of students encourages their active participation in learning and fosters effective interaction with teachers.

1.2. Foundations and Conditions for Dialogue

In the dialogue teaching mode, equality, trust, love, and humility are the foundations and conditions for dialogue.[1] According to Paulo Freire, only under these foundations and conditions can dialogue between the two parties take place on a parallel level. Equality serves as the premise and basis of dialogue. Therefore, in university English major instruction, teachers need to respect students and their differences to stimulate students' initiative. This facilitates students expressing their authentic selves, actively participating in dialogue activities, and being open to cooperation. When students feel cared for and supported by teachers, they are more likely to cooperate with the guidance, foster a harmonious teacher-student relationship, and maintain sustained dialogue based on mutual trust.

1.3. Characteristics of Dialogue

The characteristics of dialogue mainly manifest in three aspects: Firstly, dialogue involves parallel communication where communication between teachers and students is equal and democratic. Secondly, questioning is pivotal in dialogue. Particularly in university English major instruction, effective dialogue hinges on pertinent questioning. High-quality questions encourage students to think critically and develop their questioning abilities. Lastly, collaboration is essential for dialogue. Paulo Freire emphasized the significance of collaborative dialogue. In the dialogue teaching mode, both teachers and students are active participants, jointly revealing the mysteries of knowledge and achieving dialogue through cooperation and effort.[2]

2. The Application Value of Dialogue Teaching in University English Major Instruction

2.1. Overcoming Constraints of Traditional Teaching Models

In English instruction in Chinese universities, there is often a lingering emphasis on traditional pedagogical approaches, focusing heavily on final assessments and neglecting the development of students' abilities, thereby missing out on formative assessment. This inadequacy prevents students from gaining clear self-awareness and enhancing their English proficiency. In the context of dialogue teaching, the shortcomings of traditional teaching methods can be overcome. By creating a democratic and equal learning environment in the classroom and promoting diverse interactions between peers and between students and teachers, effective communication is achieved. This enhances students' language expression abilities, drives a change in teaching methods, and ignites students' interest in participating in English learning activities.[3]

2.2. Facilitating the Enhancement of Student Qualities

Contemporary university English education differs from English instruction in primary and secondary schools. It not only focuses on knowledge dissemination but also on honing students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills. In university English major instruction, incorporating dialogue teaching can break the monologue of the teacher, allowing them to become facilitators of equal communication. Considering the requirements and characteristics of university English instruction, teachers need to design appropriate English dialogue activities based on students' developmental and learning needs. Constructing topics that elicit critical thinking and facilitate active communication, and allowing students to take the lead in the classroom, can facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge and skills through hands-on, mental, and verbal engagement. Furthermore, dialogue teaching can be realized in various ways, such as role-playing and group discussions,

providing platforms for students to showcase their personalities and honing their ability to ask questions and think critically.[4]

2.3. Enhancing Students' English Proficiency

English, being a language-based subject, requires university English major instruction to focus on students' ability to communicate in English. The integration of dialogue teaching not only hones students' language imitation and expression abilities but also fosters effective interaction between teachers and students, creating a conducive context for the development of students' language skills. Moreover, dialogue teaching constitutes a fresh pedagogical philosophy, emphasizing the equal interaction between teachers and students. This departure from the oppressive nature of traditional pedagogy suits the individualized growth of university students. It provides students with more opportunities for personal development, nurtures their self-esteem and self-confidence, and is particularly crucial for stimulating students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

3. Principles of Applying Dialogue Teaching in University English Major Instruction

3.1. Close Connection to Life

Life is the classroom and the classroom is life. They complement each other, requiring university English major instruction to be closely related to students' real-life experiences. For instance, teaching content should be relevant to students' lives, focusing on their interests, integrating real-life knowledge, and aligning with students' cognition. Appropriate teaching methods that resonate with students' interests, such as situational creation and role-playing, should be employed, starting from familiar objects. Utilizing teaching methods that capture students' interest can engage them and facilitate effective English learning.[5]

3.2. Integration of In-Class and Out-of-Class Learning

In order to ensure the organized implementation of dialogue teaching activities, certain conditions are needed to support them. Rich experiences and solid knowledge are prerequisites for students to engage in dialogue. Only with abundant experience and strong English skills can teachers provide informed answers and guide students to think critically. Therefore, in university English major instruction using dialogue teaching, teachers should follow the principle of integrating in-class and out-of-class learning. This involves focusing not only on in-class teacher-student and student-student dialogues but also on out-of-class teacher-student and student-student interactions, guiding students towards comprehensive dialogue experiences.[6]

3.3. Tailoring Teaching to Individual Needs

Dialogue teaching emphasizes equal, democratic interaction and communication. University English teachers need to recognize the diversity of student characteristics and respect individual differences, fostering an inclusive environment. Since both teachers and students possess equal speaking rights, each student can participate in dialogue, gaining space to express themselves. Therefore, teachers should adhere to the principle of tailoring teaching to individual needs, guiding students of different levels to grow through dialogue.

3.4. Encouraging Autonomous Learning

For effective dialogue during English classes, voluntary engagement is crucial. If students lack

initiative, they will struggle to grasp the intended message. Autonomous engagement is the foundation of dialogue teaching activities. Therefore, teachers need to give the classroom back to students, respecting their role as active learners. Adequate time for reflection and exploration should be provided. Especially during dialogue, stimulating student interest is important. Additionally, teachers should recognize the importance of autonomous learning, imparting effective self-learning techniques to students and cultivating their ability to learn independently.

4. Strategies for Applying Dialogue Teaching in University English Major Instruction

4.1. Teacher-Student Dialogue: Emphasizing Equality in Teaching

In teacher-student dialogue, communication occurs on an equal basis through two-way language exchange. Therefore, in university English major instruction, teachers need to communicate with students as equals, using conversation to highlight key points and encouraging students to think deeply about cultural nuances. Firstly, creating a dialogue context is essential to stimulate students' dialogue awareness. Teachers should update their teaching concepts, move away from traditional didactic teaching models, and build an open and inspiring English classroom. This facilitates a rebuilt teacher-student relationship and a restructured English teaching process. In specific lessons, teachers serve as organizers and guides in dialogue activities, actively participating, providing timely guidance, and adjusting as needed. For instance, in an E-mails lesson, teachers can design questions like "How do you view self-media?" to stimulate active student expression and foster a sense of connection to the text. Secondly, leveraging professional strengths boosts student confidence. Teachers should utilize their expertise to skillfully guide students in questioning and critical thinking. Especially in assisting struggling students, teachers should communicate more, understand students' situations, provide encouragement, and foster a positive cycle of growth.

4.2. Student-Student Dialogue: Emphasizing Openness in Learning

In student-student dialogue, students engage in dialogue with each other, sharing learning experiences and knowledge. Therefore, during English dialogue teaching, attention should be given to student-student interaction, promoting the openness of English learning. Firstly, group cooperative learning methods should be utilized, allowing students time for sharing and communication. Engaging in group discussions, students actively express opinions and thoughts, engaging in in-depth communication and exploration through collaborative brainstorming to find effective problem-solving methods. Within group discussions, diverse opinions arise due to the differences among group members, allowing students to broaden their problem-solving thinking through interchanging thoughts, and to exercise listening and speaking skills while freely expressing ideas and humbly accepting suggestions. Effective grouping is key during group dialogues, and teachers can form groups based on task difficulty. Groups can consist of students with different task proficiency levels, complementing each other's skills for mutual improvement. Additionally, grouping based on students' interests enhances communication efficiency, as students with similar interests communicate more easily, resulting in rapid task completion.

4.3. Teacher-Text Dialogue: Enhancing the Foresight of Teaching

Teacher-text dialogue involves dialogue between teachers and the authors of the text. Therefore, teachers need to be familiar with and understand the text deeply. Firstly, adopting diverse interpretations of English texts is essential. As university English teachers, they must clarify the teaching tasks of this stage, update their lesson preparation concepts, and focus on interpreting

English text materials to gain a profound understanding. This enables them to lead students in deep dialogue with the text during class. Secondly, integrating English materials is important. University English textbooks encompass diverse humanities knowledge, such as cultural materials and ethical knowledge. Due to limited teaching time and differing student interpretations, teachers must consider students' life experiences, cognitive differences, and learning needs when discussing topics, creating dialogue targets with different levels, and diversifying teaching content. By selecting, refining, and optimizing English text resources, students' specialized learning needs can be satisfied. Lastly, reconstructing discussion topics is vital. While interpreting texts, teachers should reconstruct topics based on students' situations, enhancing the topic's predictability and generative potential. Predictive topics are established through comprehensive consideration of text depth, student English proficiency, and scientific teaching objectives, guiding dialogue activities toward clear objectives. Generative topics emerge from text discussions, adjusted based on student interests and learning needs, encouraging multi-dimensional dialogue between students and the text.

4.4. Student-Text Dialogue: Enhancing Learning Autonomy

Student-text dialogue involves students engaging in dialogue with the text, understanding its deeper meaning through comprehension. In fact, the process of learning text works is a form of dialogue, emphasizing the autonomy of student-text dialogue. Firstly, respecting students' role in the classroom is crucial. Providing ample time for thinking and exploration allows students to engage in in-depth dialogue with the text through profound learning. Teachers should encourage students to question, inquire, and criticize, fostering their autonomous exploration of the text. Secondly, thoughtful student-text dialogue is essential. Teachers need to guide students in conversing with the text through annotation and outlining, promoting dialogue through different means. For example, guiding students in learning "The Mystery of the Titanic" involves them completing pre-class assignments in a dialogue format, gaining a basic understanding of the text content and marking unclear sections for deeper understanding of the author's perspective and implied sentences.

4.5. In-Class Dialogue: Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness

In university English major studies, different students have different emotional triggers. Therefore, during dialogue learning, various emotions such as enthusiasm and resistance may emerge. Effective guidance from teachers is crucial at this point. Firstly, diverse teaching methods should be employed. University English instruction is flexible, allowing for situational creation, role-playing, or group discussions to guide students in dialogue based on the learning objectives. For example, using role-playing requires pre-setting dialogue scenes and assigning roles to students for practice before the class, allowing students to engage in role-playing during the class, with the teacher and other students acting as judges. This experiential approach helps students grasp practical application scenarios. Secondly, incorporating appreciation education is important. During classroom dialogues, teachers should motivate high-achieving students, boosting their confidence, while also encouraging struggling students. Different levels of students engage in effective communication during classroom dialogue, helping teachers understand student situations, adjust teaching content and progress, and assisting students in self-awareness and active participation, improving their learning abilities.

4.6. Out-of-Class Dialogue: Highlighting Learning Diversity

University students have more free time compared to primary and secondary school students, allowing for natural dialogue between teachers and students outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers should guide students in using free time for dialogue and English speaking practice. Firstly,

out-of-class dialogue clarifies students' learning motives. Through this approach, students can define their English learning goals and emphasize English speaking practice. Secondly, it compensates for classroom teaching limitations. Teachers need to provide dialogue techniques, create interactive platforms on social media, share English learning materials on platforms like WeChat and QQ, and guide students in multi-dimensional dialogues on specific topics. Lastly, out-of-class dialogue helps teachers understand student characteristics from multiple angles, providing a basis for personalized classroom teaching, enriching English dialogue teaching activities, and broadening students' horizons.

5. Conclusion

Dialogue teaching is a teaching approach that emphasizes equal interaction between teachers and students, allowing the spark of thoughts to ignite through active communication. During the process of dialogue learning, students not only acquire knowledge through interactions with peers and teachers, but teachers also gain valuable information through these interactions. This enables effective communication, understanding of students' needs, and tailored instruction. Therefore, in university English major instruction, teachers should flexibly apply dialogue teaching methods, highlight the characteristics of the English language, stimulate students' initiative, guide them to learn both knowledge and methods through dialogue, and foster cross-cultural thinking.

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