

Considerations on the Enhancement of English Reading Teaching Strategies in High School

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Abstract

With the continuous deepening of globalization, the requirements for people's English proficiency have been increasing in the new era. Reading, as a significant aspect of English proficiency, goes beyond language knowledge and also includes cross-cultural awareness, critical thinking, and so on. This requires the enhancement and innovation of traditional English reading teaching strategies. This paper is aimed at providing valuable advice on English reading teaching strategies, making contributions to the improvement of English reading teaching system and the cultivation of students' comprehensive English reading abilities.

Keywords

English Reading Teaching Strategies, Interest, Critical Thinking, Interaction

1. Introduction

With the rapid advancement of globalization, English is increasingly significant in the international communication. Among all aspects of the English language, reading integrates vocabulary, grammar, logic and cultural knowledge and has always been highly valued by teachers. Under the guidance of the current high school English curriculum standards, reading teaching has been endowed with more functions and goals. It is no longer merely confined to the input of language knowledge and the accumulation of vocabulary and grammar, but rather emphasizes the understanding of texts, the improvement of thinking skills and the enhancement of critical reading abilities. Nevertheless, there are still many problems existing in the English reading teaching class. The traditional intensive reading and translation-based teaching pattern are mostly adopted by teachers while the cultivation of students' comprehensive reading abilities is often neglected. Undoubtedly, this

kind of tedious instruction usually makes students feel tired of English reading. At the same time, the polarization of students' reading levels and the exam-oriented teaching arrangements also limit the innovation and diversification of teaching methods to a certain extent. Concurrently, the rapid development of information technology and the continuous update of educational concepts have provided new possibilities for high school English reading teaching. Teachers can apply various teaching strategies, such as task-based teaching, cooperative learning and so on to arouse students' interest and promote their understanding. Therefore, delving into and optimizing the teaching methods of high school English reading is not only a realistic choice in response to the demands of modern education, but also an inevitable requirement under the background of improving teaching quality and promoting students' all-round development. Under the backdrop of the development of education in the new era, conducting a systematic research on the teaching methods of high school English reading is not only of significant theoretical value but also has prominent practical importance. How to enhance students' language proficiency while taking into account the cultivation of their thinking quality, cultural literacy and learning interest has become an urgent issue that needs to be addressed in current high school English teaching. The study will include four parts. The first part is introduction which will introduce the topic, explain its importance and present an overview of the article's structure. The second part is research background including the overview of relevant researches and the discussion of gaps and chances in this field. The third part is the teaching ideas. This part will propose new teaching strategies and discuss the application, advantages and challenges. The last part is the conclusion, including the summary of the main points and practical value and the advice for teachers and future research. This paper aims to explore innovative English reading teaching strategies for teachers, contributing to the construction of a student-centered and ability-oriented reading teaching system.

2. Literature Review

Reading instruction has always been a key focus of English teaching and has long been of great concern to researchers. Many researchers have conducted in-depth researches in the field of English reading instruction.

Ge (Ge, 2012) holds the view that teaching reading emphasizes language knowledge, content processing, understanding and thinking. Reading teaching requires teachers to fully stimulate students' initiative and creativity in the classroom. At the same time, teachers should pay attention to improve students' culture cognition and critical thinking. Critical thinking is a rational and reflective thinking process that evaluates thinking through certain standards and improves its rationality and reflection. It is both a thinking skill and a thinking tendency. Critical thinking requires people to conduct rational, skeptical and unbiased analysis of the information they receive, evaluate factual evidence, and form judgments. Its main purpose is to strive for the most rational and objective judgments.

Ma (Ma, 2003) believes that when teaching English reading, teachers should not only teach students to understand the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences, but also to teach them how to use these words and expressions. Additionally, teachers are also expected to help students to improve the ability of analysis and judgement in reading. Besides, teachers should also focus on guiding students to consciously understand the internal meaning, communicative meaning, relationship between sentences and paragraphs, discourse arrangement, and thematic ideas of the text.

In the pre reading preparation stage, Qu (Qu, 2010) mentioned that teachers should consciously guide students to collaborate, with each group responsible for several questions, and then several groups communicate their answers separately. This enables students to anticipate the content of the text in advance and develop an interest in reading, which will transform passive reading into active reading. Xiong (Xiong, 2014) thinks that in reading teaching, teachers are expected to create activities related to reading to promote students' mastery of new vocabulary or phrases in the material, help students understand the background and central idea of the article, and stimulate students' interest in learning.

Regarding the teaching methods during the reading process, researchers proposed many ideas. In terms of genre-based teaching method, Liang (Liang, 2010) holds the opinion that the essence of genre-based teaching method is to start from the special structures of different genres, allowing students to understand the socio-cultural context, procedures, and language characteristics of discourse generation. It cultivates students' genre cognition ability, analyzes the macro structure of different body cutting discourses layer by layer, discusses the social and cultural context, communicative purposes, grammatical and rhetorical characteristics, and related professional knowledge of discourse generation. This method enables students to firmly establish the graphic structure of a certain body cutting discourse in their minds, and allows them to quickly grasp the key points of the article and understand its deep connotations in post class reading. As for the mind map teaching method, Wang (Wang, 2018) concluded in his research that after introducing mind maps into English reading teaching, students' attitudes towards English reading tend to develop in a positive direction. This is particularly evident in the fact that students can actively participate in discussions and answer questions during class, and actively engage in English reading after class under. In this process, students consider doing English reading as an improvement in their abilities rather than just for exams. In terms of thematic teaching method, Li (Li, 2018) thinks that the exploration of thematic meaning in foreign language learning should be based on the richness of textual thematic content, information, and perspectives. Teachers should have the awareness of analyzing the value of discourse and pay attention to whether the discourse is suitable for exploring and sublimating the thematic meaning. For content with thematic significance and exploration value, teachers should consider how to guide students to gradually understand and express the thematic significance over a longer period of time.

In addition, Wang (Wang, 2017) mentioned that teachers should guide students to learn rhetorical devices in questioning, summarizing, and appreciating texts when teaching reading. The rhetorical methods used in English speaking countries differ greatly from the mainstream rhetorical methods in China. Teachers should guide students to promote the integration and development of their own language and thinking through empathy, discussion, questioning, and other methods, forming multicultural thinking and achieving deep learning. In the process of laying the foundation for language knowledge, the connotation of each vocabulary not only includes the simple meaning or pronunciation of the word, but also reflects a concept. It is necessary for teachers to combine the concept behind each word with the content of the text when teaching reading. As a result, students' processing of textual information will not be limited to the level of language knowledge, but can form new cognition.

Mao (Mao, 2009) holds the belief that that teachers should design effective reading activities to help students transform and reorganize information, activating their thinking. As teachers cannot observe students' thinking activities in the process of reading comprehension, it is important for teachers to accurately evaluate the development of reading comprehension and skills through these activities (Brown, 2001). Activities such as selection, sorting, filling out forms, Q&A, interviews, performances, abbreviations, and predictions can enable students to interact with the text from multiple perspectives, deepening their understanding of the text.

In the later stage of reading, Chen (Chen, 2004) thinks that this stage should be a summary and extension of the learning tasks of this lesson. At this stage, teachers are expected to provide students with extra materials of similar difficulty. It is a good way for teachers to check the effectiveness of the lesson and it is beneficial for students to consolidate the skills they have learned in the class.

There are still some challenges in English reading teaching research field. For example, because different students have different English levels, teachers cannot achieve ideal teaching efficiency via the same method. And the assessment of specific teaching strategies needs numerous and long-term data which are difficult to collect. Besides, with the development of information technology, researchers are supposed to study the appropriate application of modern technology in reading teaching.

Future research should pay more attention to the interaction mechanism between individual differences and learning motivation of students, integrate artificial intelligence and big data technologies, and develop personalized and dynamic reading teaching models to improve teaching accuracy and effectiveness, providing theoretical and practical support for the construction of a high-quality English reading teaching system.

3. Teaching Strategies

3.1. Pre Reading Stage

From my perspective, in order to teach English reading effectively, the first step is

stimulating students' interest of it. With the rapid development of modern science and technology, multimedia-assisted teaching has been applied in more and more English teaching classes. There are various convenient applications for English reading nowadays. For instance, in the Mint Reading app, each English article is accompanied by a complete set of lecture notes, background information, exquisite illustrations, mind maps and audio, whose functions are quite comprehensive. And in the Fenba Reading app, users can easily find the definitions of new words in the articles and can also quickly bookmark the articles they like for future review. Fenba Reading can also effectively save users' learning records and ensure the security of users' data.

Before the reading class begins, teachers can use slides to display pictures or video clips related to the reading topic, play relevant songs, organize the whole class to play small games, tell interesting stories to students, etc., in order to arouse students' interest in the upcoming reading passage. Some students have negative emotions towards English reading and resist reading in heart because they are unfamiliar with the reading theme, they have no interest in the content, or they do not have a good command of English. Then, teachers are expected to attract students' attention and spark their interest by vivid videos, beautiful songs and funny games. In a research (Zhai, 2015) on the application of multimedia-assisted teaching in English reading instruction, the researchers found that the test scores of the experimental group using multimedia teaching were 1.97 points higher than those of the control group, with a p-value less than 0.05. The result indicated that the application of multimedia in English reading teaching not only arouses students' interest but also cultivate their reading ability.

At this stage, teachers are supposed to make a brief introduction about the background of the reading passage. Background information definitely enables students to avoid misunderstanding and one-sided interpretation. It helps students better understand the content, especially in some articles with specific historical, cultural and social settings. Apart from that, the introduction about the author's identity and experiences, historical background and creation motivation can help students grasp the main idea of the passage, cultivating their abilities of critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding. Meanwhile, this process can stimulate students' reading interest and exploration desire, promoting their learning efficiency and reading quality.

After briefly introducing the reading topic, teachers are expected to encourage students to share their understanding, opinions or experiences relevant to the topic. It helps students relate the content they are about to read to their real life, which is beneficial for reducing students' unfamiliarity with the reading material and alleviating their reading pressure. And this method also prompts students to explore the reading content more actively.

A new reading passage often contains some words that students are unfamiliar with or do not recognize. Many of these new words are closely related to the theme of the passage and are even crucial for understanding the passage. Many students

often feel scared and nervous about reading because of these unfamiliar words. When they find some unfamiliar words in the passage, they will lose confidence in their ability to understand the entire article. Teachers are expected to explain the new words in the passage to students before the reading begins. Apart from the pronunciation and meaning of the words, teachers should also supplement the knowledge related to the reading theme for students, so as to reduce their reading obstacles. For the teaching challenge of the polarization of students' reading level, these activities can make it easier for students with poor proficiency to read the passage and boost their reading confidence.

After that, teachers can pose several questions related to the reading materials. These questions should be clear, valuable and appropriate for students' current English learning level. By asking students to read with these questions in mind, teachers can make students' reading more purposeful and promote their thinking while reading.

3.2. While Reading Stage

For analyzing the passage, teachers can lead students to quickly skim through the text to figure out the structural framework of the article, identify the topic sentences of each paragraph and the topic sentence of the whole article. This method will enable students to have a preliminary understanding of the content, language style and central idea of the article. It is also beneficial for students to improve their confidence in reading.

Then, teachers need to guide students to find the relevant content in the article related to the previously raised questions, and let students answer those questions. This method will make students further familiar with the content of the article, and at the same time promote students' in-depth thinking about the content and give their own answers.

After students answering the questions, teachers can start to analyze the language details in the article, such as the phenomenon of new meanings of familiar words in specific contexts, the actual meanings of slang or proverbs, complex and difficult long sentences with multiple structures, diverse rhetorical devices and so on.

For some new words in the text, teachers can not only explain them to students before reading, but also guide students to guess the meanings of the words by themselves based on the context during the reading process. If students always look up the dictionary for the meanings of unfamiliar words each time they read new articles, it will absolutely be a waste of time and greatly reduce the efficiency of reading. Also, during the exam, students are not allowed to look up the meanings of new words in the dictionary. Therefore, teachers are supposed to teach students to guess the meanings of words by referring to the general meaning of the sentence or paragraph, language logic, common sense of daily life, their personal experience, and word formation rules. This method will not only be conducive to improving the efficiency of English reading but also help to deepen stu-

dents' impression of these new words.

In addition, teachers should also deeply analyze the author's emotions and intentions, especially the ideas that the author wants to convey under a special historical background. Teachers are supposed to encourage students to further think about the philosophical, historical and political significance of the article rather than merely understanding its literal meaning.

Apart from that, teachers are expected to consciously cultivate students' critical thinking ability, allowing students to make their own judgments on the article, summarize its advantages and disadvantages, and express their own opinions and insights on the issues mentioned in the article. In traditional English reading teaching classrooms, teachers focus on the comprehension of literal information and the mastery of language points at the most of time, while neglecting the analysis and evaluation of the author's viewpoints, the stance of the text, and cultural differences. In fact, English reading is not only a process of language input but also a process of ideological collision and value judgment. English reading teaching should not be limited to exam-oriented teaching arrangements. The cultivation of critical thinking ability can help students not blindly follow the content of the text but learn to question, compare, judge and reflect. For instance, when teaching argumentative essays, teachers are expected to guide students to discuss the sufficiency of the argument and the objectivity of the viewpoints. Students should not only answer teachers' questions but also propose their own valuable questions. When it comes to cultural texts, teachers can encourage students to study local culture, exploring the differences and relations between different value concepts. Therefore, students can have a profound understanding of the passages and further enhance cross-culture awareness.

3.3. Post Reading Stage

An outstanding article usually contains many advanced vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, ingenious rhetorical devices, and beautiful sentences that are worthy of students' reference. If students can master these elements, they will be able to quickly identify these words and grammatical structures in future reading, or flexibly apply them in writing. Therefore, after finishing a lesson on reading, teachers are supposed to select the key vocabulary, grammar points, and good sentences from the article, and assign exercises such as vocabulary filling, grammar selection, and sentence translation to help students consolidate the knowledge they have learned, enabling them to gain more knowledge about English language on the basis of understanding the article.

Besides, teachers are expected to guide students to retell the article and summarize the main viewpoints in their own words. Through retelling, students can not only test their mastery of the article's main viewpoints and author's emotion but also deepen their internalization of the information during the process of converting language expressions. This process can encourage students to transform passive received information into active language output. It definitely can help stu-

dents to improve their logical organization ability and oral expression ability. Meanwhile, summarizing the main viewpoints of the article can help students grasp the core of the text, clarify the structure and argumentation of the article, and further enhance their summarization ability and critical thinking level. In teaching practice, teachers can adopt various methods such as oral retelling, group cooperation summary, or written brief description to encourage students to express their own understanding and opinions in English.

Teachers are expected to organize students to carry out extension group activities based on the themes of the articles, such as debates, role-playing, which can be an effective way to help students achieve deep learning and promote their comprehensive application of English language. By creating an authentic language environment, the debates centered on the controversial viewpoints in the essays can promote students' logical thinking and language expression ability. In addition, teachers are expected to organize role play games to help students experience the characters' inner world and get a deep understanding of the plots. In a study (Hu, 2014) examining the effect of cooperative learning methods on improving students' English reading abilities, the researchers found that the students in the experimental class, guided by the cooperative learning theory, showed better performance compared to the control class. Moreover, through the questionnaire survey, the researchers found that the students in the experimental class showed improvements in their learning interest, learning motivation, self-confidence and communication skills, and their reading ability also significantly enhanced.

Eventually, teachers can evaluate the development of students' development of critical thinking and cross-culture awareness in English reading from multiple aspects.

For the assessment of students' development of critical thinking. First of all, teachers can assess whether students can raise valuable questions about the content of the articles. From these questions, teachers can assess whether or not students reflect on the preciseness of the article's argument logic, the reliability of the supporting evidence, the author's true writing intention, and so on. Besides, teachers are expected to observe students' discussion performance. Teachers can assess whether students are able to propose innovative and independent opinions, and rationally question or supplement other classmates' viewpoints. In addition, teachers are supposed to encourage students to write a short essay about the issues discussed in class, and then evaluate the quality of the essay.

For the assessment of students' cross-cultural awareness development. Firstly, teachers can evaluate whether students are able to objectively and rationally analyze specific cross-cultural conflicts. Apart from that, teachers are expected to observe students' attitudes towards foreign cultures in discussions, ranging from rejection, indifference, tolerance, to positive attitude. Furthermore, teachers can encourage students to propose methods promoting cross-cultural communication, and then teachers assess the feasibility and effectiveness of their plans.

These activities can not only improve students' participation in class but also

encourage students to have in-depth thinking about the theme, emotions and content of the article.

4. Conclusion

This article systematically explores the strategies of high school English reading teaching. From different stages from pre, while and post reading, the essay proposes specific and operable teaching strategies. By stimulating students' interest before reading, establishing a contextual background during reading, and strengthening language knowledge consolidation and language output training after reading, it aims to construct a progressive and in-depth teaching process, thereby comprehensively improving students' English reading ability and comprehensive quality.

Looking forward to the future, the research on English reading teaching should pay more attention to interdisciplinary integration and personalized teaching exploration. On the one hand, modern technology means such as artificial intelligence and big data can be used to achieve dynamic monitoring and precise feedback of students' reading behaviors and learning outcomes. On the other hand, more empirical research on reading strategy transfer, critical thinking development and cultural awareness construction should be carried out to expand the depth and breadth of reading teaching. In addition, in curriculum design, more teaching models such as project-based learning, thematic reading, and cross-cultural comparison should be integrated to make reading teaching truly become an effective carrier for cultivating students' language ability, thinking quality, and humanistic literacy.

It is hoped that the analysis in this article can provide reference for front-line English teachers and also provide theoretical basis and practical inspiration for further exploration in English reading teaching fields.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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