The Current Situation of Deep Learning to English Reading Teaching in Senior High School

Wenjing Li

Education faculty, China West Normal University, Nanchong 637000, China.

*Abstract:*Deep learning advocates a deep understanding of knowledge, grasps the knowledge's inherent meaning; and transfers it to solve practical problems in real situations based on students' construction actively. While there are some problems in English reading teaching in senior high school, such as fragmentation of discourse information and superficiality of teaching design.

Keywords: Deep Learning; English Reading; English Reading Teaching

Introduction

General High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)[1]put forward four aims for the competence of English discipline: Language Ability, Learning Ability, Cultural Awareness, and Thinking Quality. Language learning, also required that English teaching develops students' thinking ability, cultivated the right value orientation, and asked students to be a man with critical and innovative thinking and the ability to solve problems.

English reading teaching is one of the significant methods of training students' competence. However, there are some problems in traditional reading teaching, such as fragmentation of discourse information and superficiality of teaching design. Those problems will lead to reading comprehension at a low level, and a lack of activities to show students' higher-order thinking. Deep learning in reading teaching, which mainly focuses on three aspects---the relativity and integrity of teaching content, students' autonomous exploration, and deep understanding, analyzing, assessing, and creating, is an important approach to changing the current situation of English reading teaching and develop students' competence. After reading a large of literature, deep learning theory research in China relatively falls behind, in three parts as follows: lacking relative research about deep learning of senior high school students and combination with English discipline. Especially, the lack of research combined with important course types in English disciplines. During senior high school, students' recognition gradually changed and took abstract logical thinking as a lead, and it is a key stage for students to train in higher-order thinking. At the same time, deep innovation in the English curriculum requires students with higher quality and standards. It is necessary to research deep learning in senior high school English reading courses.

This essay will firstly discuss the concept of deep learning and surface learning and how these concepts relate to each other. Following this, it will introduce the current situation and problems of English reading teaching. Finally, it will make a summary of deep learning to English reading teaching and give some advice.

1. The Basic Idea of Deep Learning and Surface Learning

Deep learning is a kind of state and process, which is also a higher order with positive, high input and comprehensive memorizing, and its learning result in strong transfer (Marton & Saljo, 1976)[2]. Furthermore, based on Marton and Saljo's research, Australian scholar Biggs took the learning process aim at "deep level" and "surface level". And he believed that during the surface learning, students don't need to spend a lot of time and energy finishing learning tasks, it is mainly through memorizing to finish tasks without the connection of previous experience and their concepts and opinion, while deep learning aims at understanding and exploring meaning, and strives to guide students to connect previous knowledge with current experience, therefore, students will accept knowledge critically (Biggs, J.B. 1987)[3].

Surface learners will pay more attention to knowledge acquisition rather than deep application. On the contrary, deep

learners can further process on they've learned, compared to the former, deep learner always can integrate new knowledge that they learned to summarize relative rules. Besides, deep learners can integrate and absorb knowledge by correcting mistakes (Noel Enwistle, 2000)[4]. Surface learning is more prone to understanding and memorizing knowledge, which is just for finishing some tasks and avoiding punishment. It is hard to transfer and apply knowledge; because surface learning only focuses on memory and practice mechanically. Furthermore, this way of processing knowledge without much thinking, and English learners rarely have the opportunity to participate in activities in a real sense, their purpose of learning only for passing the exam and getting a good grade (Tracy Wilson Smith, 2007)[5].

Surface learning means accepting fragile knowledge and it is difficult to form a system on knowledge structure. In addition, in any type of learning, surface learning will affect students' understanding process so it is hard for them to get into deep learning state. As a result, learning interest can not be mobilized. While deep learning requires students to absorb knowledge with critical thinking. Besides, by thinking independently and rebuilding knowledge structure, deep learning will connect the learner's previous experience with new information to build a new knowledge system. Therefore, from thought to practice, it is the ability to solve problems that is the final form (Houghton,2014)[6].

Although foreign scholars have different definitions of deep learning, there is something in common, such as the differences between deep learning and surface learning and the inherent understanding of deep learning. In conclusion, surface learning is at a lower cognitive level and is the acquisition of low-level cognitive skills, involving low-order thinking activities; while deep learning is at a high-level cognitive level, facing the acquisition of advanced cognitive skills, involving higher-order thinking.

2. The Current Situation and Problems of English Reading Teaching

As a lingua franca widely used in international society, English has very important significance and value for Chinese learners, and it has gradually become an important factor to affect the all-around development of students. Moreover, Jeremy Harmer in his book *How to teach English* once said there are numerous reasons to teach reading, but four reasons were mainly illustrated: some of the language sticks in their minds as part of the process of language acquisition; reading texts provide good models for English writing; reading texts also provide opportunities to study language; good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite imaginative responses and be the springboard for well-rounded, fascinating lessons. However, in English reading teaching, along with it came some relatively serious problems. In the following part, it will mainly analyze teacher and student.

As we all know that many English teachers have not changed their teaching ideas, so in a real teaching situation, the teacher pays much more attention to 'teaching' than 'learning' because their teaching ideas were affected by evaluation. Especially in the English curriculum, taking language knowledge and language skills as a core is still dominant. As for reading, many teachers still consider vocabulary and grammar as key points, which brings out that students easily ignore cultural concepts hidden by vocabulary, the deep meaning of the text, and the relationship between language learning, text structure, and main idea. In this way, students only accept fragile knowledge, instead of an integrity system. It is difficult to promote the construction of new knowledge by relying only on the understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and the integration, application, and internalization of the text content, and students will inevitably lack a deep understanding of the text (Wangqiang, 2017)[7]. Besides, teachers are short of professional guidance in reading teaching, which is one of the important factors. So far, these problems did not solve, such as how to lead students to read effectively, how many scientific reading methods exist, and what kinds of reading disciplines and principles should be followed (Wangqiang, 2017)[7].

High school education has traditionally been rooted in didactic teaching and reading activities such as grammar, vocabulary, and key sentences. As we all know that didactic learning, also known as passive learning, is an efficient way of delivering information to students (Meganne K. Makso, 2020)[8]. However, students depend upon teachers for information rather than developing the ability to find information on their own (Freeman et al., 2014; Lumpkin, Achen, & Dodd, 2015)[9][10]. At the same time, Jeremy Harmer also noted that reading is not a passive skill, students need to be engaged with what they are reading, and students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.

In terms of learning purpose, students' motivation is utilitarian and examination-oriented. Most students' learning

motivation is original from the teacher and parents' requirements, for passing the exam, getting a higher education, and better work, these motivations cannot maintain long-term deep learning. Only a small part of students has the stronger internal motivation, they take interest and self-development as a breakthrough for learning English. It can be seen that students' motivation paly an important role in English learning, especially internal motivation. In terms of learning behavior, high school students' reading strategy is mechanical and simplified. According to the statistics by Fengyuan Hu (2021)[11], the result shows that students almost do not have conscious to use reading strategy in English reading, when unfamiliar vocabulary appears in the text, most students would like to depend on the teacher or other students, and some of them will buy a reference book to help them understand the text. It can be seen that students are not reading from deep learning to reading comprehension, but it takes some methods to complete tasks and solve specified and mechanical problems. Only a few students can deep learn English reading, for instance, they can predict the text, pay attention to the topic sentence of every paragraph and find out a sentence that can express the writer's idea. These students can use effectively reading strategy, as a result, it promotes the development of creative and critical thinking.

Reading comprehension can be described as a complex and complicated process, in which the reader engages with a text to obtain meaning and understanding from it. Comprehension is achieved by employing the reader's cognitive processes and metacognitive skills to understand the text's meaning (Kintsch, 2002)[12]. The reader's understanding, and resulting comprehension, are thus facilitated by the skills and strategies at his or her command. A reading strategy is therefore the mental tool that the reader may apply consciously, or semi-consciously, to monitor, repair or comprehend what they read (Afflerbach & Cho, 2009)[13]. Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008)[14] noted that reading strategies are in fact techniques the reader employs that over time may become an automatic part of the reading process but will require practice and frequent use "during reading to become so" (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 368)[15].

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, Deep learning advocates a deep understanding of knowledge, grasps the knowledge's inherent meaning and transfers it to solve practical problems in real situations based on students' construction actively. This essay illustrates and analyzes the current situation of deep learning in senior high school, which points out that most students separately absorb knowledge and they do not form a complete knowledge system, let alone transfer what they learned and rebuilt knowledge structure. Next, it also discussed the differences between deep learning and surface learning, students are prone to surface learning and they will not get information on their own, most of the time, they depend on the teacher and someone else. Also, when they learn new knowledge, they would like to memorize it mechanically. Finally, in terms of teacher and student, this essay analyzes carefully the reason why most students cannot deep learning, the result shows that some teachers don't refresh their teaching idea, their teaching idea can't meet students' demands, and no professional guidance. Another main reason is that students with weak internal motivation and learning behavior. As discussed above, the teacher should change their teaching idea and make the right measures to sharpen teaching skills, student also should be positive learners and deep learners.

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