

# The Function of English Newspaper Reading in Junior High School Students' English Learning

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**Abstract:** English is playing a more and more important role in society as an international language. China's Ministry of Education has put forward higher requirements for English curriculum. But actually there are some problems in junior high school English Teaching in China, such as boring teaching methods and single teaching content. English newspaper reading can effectively solve these problems. Based on the interactive reading model, theories of Krashen's input and affective filter hypothesis and schema theory, this thesis mainly analyzes the validity of assistance and clarifies the significance of English newspaper in junior high school English learning. The goal of this thesis is to analyze the advantages of English newspaper reading and apply it effectively. The author expects the effective combination of English learning and English newspaper reading can give full play to the learning enthusiasm of students and better serve the junior high school English teaching.

**Keywords:** English newspaper reading; Junior high school English learning; Language ability The Function of English Newspaper Reading in Junior High School Students' English Learning

## Introduction

While the human race is stepping into an information era with rapid development of high technology, English is becoming more and more significant as an international language, it has become the most widely used language in all fields of human life. Although the scale of English education in China has been expanding since the reform and opening up, and remarkable achievements have been made in education and teaching, there is still a large gap with the requirements of the development of the times.

Because we lack authentic English language materials, the content of language input is almost only textbooks, which greatly limits students' English learning, and it is impossible to let students learn English well with only one set of English textbooks.

## 1. Literature Review

Linguists, scholars and front-line teachers have conducted experiments and studies on English newspaper reading.

### 1.1 The Characteristics of English Newspapers

Newspapers have their own unique advantages, which are as follows: First, the language is authentic and close to life. Second, the content is novel and keeps pace with the times. Third, language difficulty is moderate. Fourth, there is rich content and diverse forms.

### 1.2 Studies on English Newspaper Reading at Home and Abroad

#### 1.2.1 Related Studies Abroad

The teaching of newspapers and periodicals in western countries such as Britain and the United States began in 1955, mainly to improve students' English reading and writing ability. English newspapers and periodicals are used as the easiest and cheapest teaching materials in all fields from kindergartens to universities. With the development of newspaper teaching in international education, countries have not only cultivated students' good habit of reading newspapers and periodicals at all stages, it also helps teachers improve their own quality and teaching level, diversify teaching methods. Researchers from different countries have made great contributions to newspaper reading.

#### 1.2.2 Related Studies at Home

Since the late 1990s, a large number of middle school English teachers began to try to improve students' reading ability through English newspaper reading. Some teachers began to instruct students to read English newspapers in class.

In the article *Using English Newspapers to Train Senior High School Students' Reading Strategies*, Chen Fengli proposed that English newspaper reading can improve students' overall English reading comprehension ability and level.

Li Aiping said in *Using English Newspapers to Assist High School Reading Teaching* that in modern English teaching, English newspaper reading can lay a solid foundation for the improvement of learners' reading comprehension ability.

## 2. Theoretical Bases

### 2.1 Krashen's Theory

Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to "the process of mastering a language other than the mother tongue through conscious learning or unconscious absorption under natural or guided circumstances" (Rod Ellis, 1999).

#### 2.1.1 Input Hypothesis

Krashen believes that second language learning depends on an understandable language input. On this basis, Krashen put forward the concept of "i+1". "i" represents the current state of language knowledge of the learner, "i+1" represents the state of language knowledge that the learner may reach in the next stage. According to input hypothesis, students' language input should be higher than students' existing language level, that is, "i+1". Reading English newspapers can meet this requirement.

### **2.1.2 Affective Hypothesis**

The main affective factors affecting second language acquisition are: learners' learning motivation, personality, emotional attitude.

So, in English teaching, teachers can use English newspapers to mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, create a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere, reduce students' learning pressure, help students establish confidence and reduce anxiety.

### **2.2 Schema Theory**

According to schema theory, the human brain acts like an information processor. The process of reading comprehension is the process in which the brain processes new knowledge and information by using its memory schema or cognitive structure. Readers use background knowledge to analyze, select and sort out the information they read, and then store it in long-term memory to accumulate knowledge, so as to complete the whole process of reading comprehension.

### **2.3 Interactive Model**

Rumhart put forward the interactive model. The bottom-up model describes a complete reading process—readers start reading from words, then transition to the interpretation of phrases and sentences, and then rise to the understanding of paragraphs and chapters. The bottom-up model emphasizes that the input information should be from low-level to high-level, and the processing of high-level levels should be processed. The processing of each level is independent and interrelated.

It advocates that reading teaching should not only pay attention to the cultivation of students' English language knowledge, but also supplement students' relevant cultural background knowledge and genre structure knowledge.

## **3. The Function of English Newspaper Reading in Junior High School Students' English Learning**

In junior middle school students' English learning, paying attention to English newspaper reading is conducive to improving students' English reading ability and writing ability, effectively expanding their vocabulary and cultivating students' cross-cultural awareness.

### **3.1 Influence on Students' English Reading Ability**

The cultivation of English reading ability is an important activity in English teaching. For a long time, the cultivation of students' English reading ability mainly depends on textbooks which is single and the content is boring. It is difficult to stimulate students' interest in reading and improve students' reading ability. The language of English newspapers and periodicals is vivid, authentic, illustrated, close to real life and the times, which helps to improve students' comprehensive language ability, especially their reading ability. In the process of reading a lot of English newspapers and periodicals, students will unconsciously improve their reading speed, so as to and large vocabulary, more sentence patterns to grammar, master more reading skills and improve their reading level.

### **3.2 Improvement of Students' Writing Ability**

People with strong writing ability read more than those with weak writing ability, so, the method of improving writing level through reading is very effective.

After reading a lot of English newspapers, students have expanded their knowledge, more comprehensively understood some common sense of life and the expression of western culture, and obtained knowledge and life skills that are not available in books. When writing in English, students can appropriately expand cultural knowledge according to the theme of writing, so as to make articles richer and more authentic.

### **3.3 Broadening Scope of Knowledge and Widening Horizon**

English newspapers have gradually become important reading reference materials for junior high school students because of their rich content, moving with the times, objectivity and authenticity, and wide range of topics. Reading English newspaper can broaden scope of knowledge and wide horizon

#### **3.3.1 Enlarging Vocabulary**

In the three-year textbooks of the people's Education Edition for junior middle school, students can only learn the vocabulary required to be memorized in the textbooks, but in real life, these vocabulary are far from enough. Students can increase their vocabulary by reading English newspapers and periodicals. After persisting in reading English newspapers and periodicals for a long time, students can obviously feel that students' knowledge has been broadened, their English language knowledge has been consolidated, and their reading experience has been richer.

#### **3.3.2 Developing Cross-cultural Awareness**

English newspaper reading can help students better understand western culture and form a sense of cross-cultural communication. Language and culture are closely related. English teaching should help students understand foreign culture, deepen their understanding of Chinese culture, expand their cultural vision, and form cross-cultural communication awareness and preliminary cross-cultural communication ability. After reading a large number of English newspapers and periodicals, students can understand western culture and thought, as well as the customs and living habits of western countries.

## **4. Methods of Using Assistance of English Newspaper Reading in English Teaching**

English reading teaching plays an important role in junior middle school English teaching and is an important link to improve students' English language application ability.

### **4.1 Newspaper Reading in Class**

If teachers organically combine the contents of teaching materials with the contents of interesting English newspapers and periodicals, they can not only effectively improve the effect of classroom teaching, but also effectively enrich the teaching contents and improve students' enthusiasm in learning English.

Teachers should choose newspapers and periodicals suitable for junior middle school students in combination with students' physical

and mental characteristics, knowledge and learning interests, so that it stimulates students' imagination in reading. Secondly, students should master the correct reading methods. For different English newspapers and periodicals, students can adopt different reading methods. For example, some newspapers and periodicals are suitable for extensive reading and some are suitable for intensive reading.

Teachers can guide reading according to the characteristics of newspapers and periodicals, for example: guess the content from the title. The title is a high generalization of the main idea of the article. Guessing the general content of the article according to the title can not only enhance students' imagination, but also improve students' oral expression ability. Teachers can encourage students to extract the words and sentences they are interested in from reading newspapers and periodicals, and then set aside time in the classroom for students to share their English knowledge of interest with their classmates and actively communicate with them. Teachers can also guide students to carry out group cooperative learning, and guide students to actively consult and expand the knowledge of the popular English news, in this way, students have the motivation to take notes and achieve the purpose of communication.

#### **4.2 Extracurricular Extensive Reading**

Of course, if students want to make full use of English newspapers and periodicals, it is far from enough to rely on the time in class, and it is unreasonable to limit yourself to the reading of a certain kind of newspapers and periodicals. Students also need to extend class reading to extracurricular reading. Extracurricular newspaper knowledge and vocabulary competitions can be held. Teachers can regularly organize students to summarize the news information of newspapers and periodicals, and then communicate in the form of competition in the class.

This not only tests the students' accumulation effect on English, but also summarizes the words with high frequency in newspapers and periodicals. Teachers can also organize students in the class to conduct a manual newspaper competition to display the classic articles and paragraphs accumulated daily. Excellent works can be displayed to the teachers and students of the whole school, so as to increase the interest and enthusiasm of students in reading to improve the quality of teaching.

### **5. Conclusion**

As an effective reading resource, English newspapers and periodicals are having a more and more important impact on English learning. Teachers need to correctly handle the relationship between English newspapers and textbooks, give full play to the auxiliary role of English newspapers and periodicals, and use English newspapers and periodicals to supplement and expand the content of textbooks, so as to reasonably and effectively assist junior middle school English teaching through English newspapers and periodicals.

English newspaper reading makes the English class gradually change from students' mechanical memory of the content taught by the teacher to student' reading with a positive learning attitude and the process of actively thinking about problems, improving cross-cultural awareness and forming autonomous learning ability.

Due to the author's limited ability and lack of experience, there are still many deficiencies in the elaboration of the role of English newspaper reading. How to make English newspaper reading play a better and fuller role in junior middle school students' English learning is still worthy of further exploration.

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